The People of the Book

Harris

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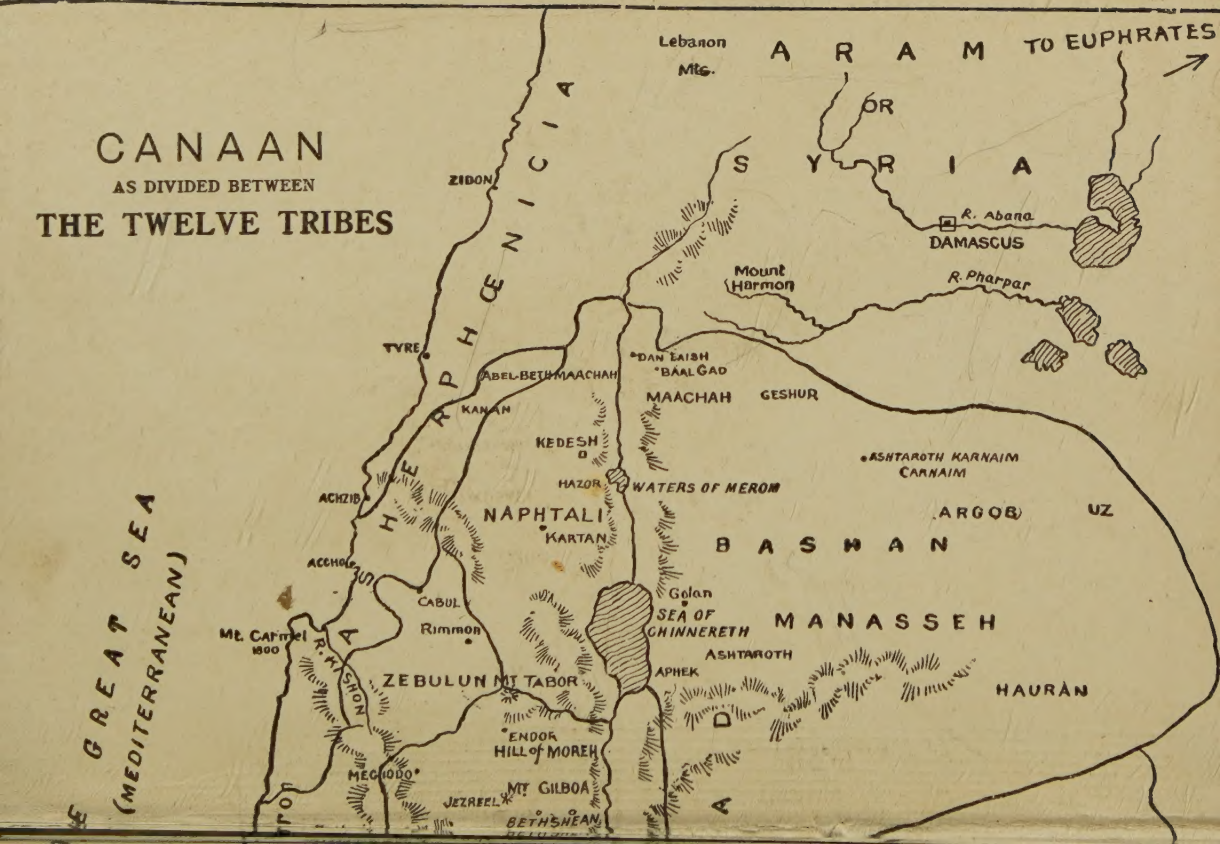
From the Conquest of Canaan
to the Death of Solomon

Illustrated


CANAAN
AS DIVIDED BETWEEN
THE TWELVE TRIBES
Lebanon
Mts.
A R A M
TO EUPHRATES
OR
S Y R I A
R. Abana
DAMASCUS
Mount Hermon
R. Pharpar
ZIDON
PHŒNICIA
TYRE
DAN LAISH
BAAL GAD
ABEL-BETH-MAACHAH
MAACHAH
GESHUR
KANAN
KEDESH
ASHTAROTH KARNAIM
CARNAIM
HAZOR
WATERS OF MEROM
ACHZIB
NAPHTALI
KARTAN
ARGOB
UZ
BASHAN
ACCHO
CABUL
Golan
SEA OF CHINNERETH
MANASSEH
Mt. Carmel 1800
R. KISHON
Rimmon
ASHTAROTH
APHEK
ZEBULUN
MT TABOR
HAURAN
ENDOR
HILL of MOREH
MEGIDDO
MT GILBOA
JEZREEL
BETHSHEAN
GREAT SEA
(MEDITERRANEAN)

MAHANAIM
GAD
FOREST OF EPHRAIM
MTS. OF EPHRAIM
MT EBAL
Shechem
Mt. Gerizim
EPHRAIM
JABBOK
PENUEL
SUCCOTH
MT Gilead
(RAMOTH MIZPEH)
JORDAN
GILEAD
AMMON
RABBATH AMMON
Great Syrian Desert
GIBBETHON
JOPPA
DAN
L. Shilah
LR. BETH-HORON
BETHEL
BENJAMIN
GEZER
EKRON
RAMAH
GILGAL
JERICHO
HESHBON
MIZPEH
GIBEAH
JERUSALEM
Mt. Seir
MT NEBO
ASHDOD
BETH-SHEMESH
BETHLEHEM
PHILISTIA
PHILISTINE COAST
Plain of
GATH
ABKELON
Libnah
REUBEN
JUDAH
TEKOAH
SALT SEA
Mts. of Judah
Wilderness of Judah
Mts. of Pisgah
ADULLAM
KEILAH
Hebron
EN-GEDI
ZIPH
BEZER
GAZA
TO EGYPT
Shephelah
SOCOH
MAON
ZIKLAG
BEER-SHEBA
SIMEON
Negeb or South Country
Abarim or
MOAB
Ar Moab
KIR OF MOAB
VALE OF SIDDIM
HORMAH ZEPHATH
AMALEKITES
EDOM

RUTH IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ.

THE

People of the Book

A Bible History for School and Home,

WITH APPENDIX CONTAINING SCRIPTURAL QUOTATIONS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE BIBLE BOOKS HERE TREATED, EXAMINATION QUESTIONS, AND A MAP.

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

Vol. II.—From the Conquest of Canaan to the Death of Solomon.

TWENTY-FOURTH EDITION.

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1918.

PREFACE TO REVISED EDITION, 1915.

In this new edition of Volume II, pictures are introduced for the first time.

"Notes for Teachers and Advanced Pupils" contain illustrations from history and literature, and also from the child's daily life; hints for practical and moral application of the lesson; Midrashic stories; biblical quotations, poems and references.

A suggestive question closes each chapter, to appeal to the thought of the child and to supply a condensed moral lesson.

A large map of Canaan, as divided among the Twelve Tribes has been prepared for this Volume; and, throughout the book, special attention is paid to the geography of Palestine and its surroundings.

The Appendix, containing twenty-four Bible selections, should be taught concurrently with the narrative portion of the volume and can be expanded into an ethical course.

To keep in the child's memory the lessons of the First Volume, they are constantly referred to throughout this book for comparison and contrast. The review of "The Law" and the Appendix in Volume I is further advised.

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land you dwell But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The people answered, "God forbid that we should forsake the Eternal to serve the other gods" Then said Joshua, "Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him." And they said, "We are witnesses, the Lord our God we will serve and unto his voice will we hearken."

Joshua was not a great teacher like Moses. He was a simple, straightforward soldier. Moses was inspired of God to build up a religion on grand moral foundations that would outlast all time. Joshua was a warrior; he wielded the sword, not the pen. We love him for his simplicity, his trust, his frankness and his courage.

It takes many different kinds of people to make a world. We cannot all be great thinkers like Moses, or even great generals like Joshua. But if we devote ourselves untiringly to that which we can do best, we will surely succeed. God has many missions of usefulness in this world of endless work. Be not disappointed if you are not destined for a great part. No position can bring dignity to the man, but man can bring dignity to any position if it be not unworthy. Be painstaking, sincere and true in your own sphere, however humble it be, and you will be a worthy "servant of the Lord."

Which is migh'ier, the pen or the sword?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Give an instance of a good motive where the action seemed bad.

Draw comparisons between Moses and Joshua.

Joshua is said to have given his people valuable laws for the protection of their property. Tradition says he was the founder of the Common Law of Property in Palestine.

Once Joshua saw an armed man and asked him, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" "Nay," he answered, "I am the captain of the host of the Lord." God does not divide the world into friends and enemies; all are His children.

Compare the last words of Joshua with Micah iv. 5.

Read Legend of Hobah, "Stanley's Jewish Church," vol. I. p. 245.

For description of supposed tomb of Joshua read "Hours with the Bible." Geikie, vol. II., p. 501.

Thus closes the Book of Joshua. The tribes of Israel are here described as united, friendly and observant of the Law. But the next book, Judges, that we will now take up, shows us that this picture is somewhat idealized.

CHAPTER VIII.

"IN THE DAYS WHEN THE JUDGES JUDGED."

BIBLE TEXT: "**The word of the Lord was rare in those days.**"

I. Samuel iii. 1.

For nearly two hundred years after the death of Joshua, Israel passed through the roughest period of its history under the rule of Judges. We are not told very much about these times; but from what we are told we can see that the manners were very rude and

that the people were wild and untrained. Peace, order and good government are generally found together. In times of war, especially ancient warfare, all is confusion, lawlessness and violence. So, fighting most of the time and with no settled government, each man in Israel could hold his own only at the sword's point.

In religion, too, they had everything yet to learn. They were not prepared to give up their idolatrous notions for a long time to come. Not out of wickedness did the tribes of Israel bow to images, teraphim and Phœnician idols. They really did not know any better. They could not yet understand that there was only one God, the Father of mankind, who is all spirit and who asks of us only what is right. At best, the Eternal was to them a God of Israel only.

Nor must we suppose that all was well in the days of Joshua. For, more than once he bade the people put away their images. Their conquests, too, made them acquainted with the life of the people about them; and the example was rarely a good one. They were won over now and then to the Canaanite worship by the gay feasts, the wild dancing and the savage riot that was always the most dangerous and the most shocking side of idolatry.

Occasionally Israel would break away from these stupid and wicked practices and turn their thoughts to nob'er things Here and there we will see great heroes sinking their own wishes for the good of the

nation, that tells of a glory to come. When they make mistakes we must pardon their ignorance, since we find they were sincere.

Although the many different Canaanite tribes among whom they lived at peace, were more in number than themselves, still the Israelites had the stronger character. So, instead of Israel finally adopting *their* mode of worship, gradually the remaining Canaanites began to accept the better lessons of the teachers of Israel. In this way many of them became merged with the Israelites, and thus increased their numbers.

We must not forget, too, that while they taught morals to the Canaanites, the Canaanites taught Israel some of the arts of civilization—particularly the tilling of the soil. So, under their guidance, many of them advanced from shepherds to farmers. They learned to grow wheat, wine, olives and figs—then the chief articles of food.

They were not a nation yet. The union between the tribes was loose and doubtful, and we will find them sometimes at war amongst themselves. Only on one or two occasions were the tribes brought together—to meet a common enemy or for a great public assembly. Whoever was strong and brave enough to lead the people successfully against their foes was made chief for the time being—just as the ancient Germans elected a leader in a time of pressing need. The Bible calls these leaders of Israel JUDGES, because in times of peace they were expected to settle the

people's disputes. These "heroes of the hour" were not, as a rule, great thinkers, but only great fighters. They were not, of course, expected to be religious teachers, though you will find some exceptions. Mostly they were men of daring and craft. They were patriots all—stern, but just.

The time of which we are writing takes us back some three thousand years, when the people of Europe were naked savages. who painted their bodies and worshiped stones. It was even before the foundations of Rome were laid—the Rome that we now call ancient. Yes, even before the real history of Greece begins—for of its doings at this period we have only fables. These comparisons may give you some idea of the distant time of which you are learning.

Were the American colonists able to learn anything from the Indians?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Draw a rough map of the world known to the ancients; starting with the Mediterranean Sea, there will be Asia Minor on the north and Egypt on the south, but very little known further west or north The bulk of the world's population, certainly of its important lands lay *east* of Canaan—Chaldea, Arabia, Babylonia and Persia.

Tell in outline the beginnings of other nations and point out the similarity and the difference between their rise and that of Israel.

CHAPTER IX.

EARLY CHAMPIONS.

BIBLE TEXT: **"She openeth her mouth with wisdom and the law of kindness is on her tongue."** *Proverbs xxxi. 26.*

When settled in their new possessions, the different tribes commenced a rough kind of government by the appointment of elders and priests. They also began to till the soil and to build towns, in the brief intervals of peace. Very brief intervals they were. It was hard work holding their conquests. Their enemies were many and powerful and from time to time would overrun their camps and pastures. Often their ploughs had to be beaten into swords; often their peaceful fields were turned into bloody battle-grounds. Then they would search for a brave leader who would rally Israel's forces and beat back the enemy. After that "the land would have peace" for many years and nothing more would be told of its life and doings until the next outbreak.

First we hear that one, Cushan Rish-a-tha im of Mesopo amia, crossed the Euphrates, came down into Canaan and oppressed Israel for several years. OTHNIEL (son-in-law of Caleb), Israel's first Judge, gathered a band of brave men of Judah and Simeon and drove off the enemy in the South. They won many places that later became important cities of these two tribes—among them Kirjath-Sepher.

They also acquired mountain land round Hebron and in this way slowly extended their boundaries further north

The next people to interrupt the peace of Israel were the Moabites. They had overrun the tribe of Benjamin and were exacting tribute from them. For, when one people partly got the better of another without completely subduing them, they would compel them to pay heavy taxes to continue on the land. These taxes grew dreadfully burdensome to Benjamin. EHUD chief of the tribe, a very daring man, who was sent to pay the yearly tribute of sheep and oxen, managed to meet Eglon, King of Moab, his people's oppressor, alone. Like most of the Benjaminites, he was left-handed. This enabled him to slay the king unawares. He made good his escape. In the confusion that followed, he gathered his clansmen by trumpet blast and defeated the Moabites, ten thousand strong. After this success, the western borderland of the Jordan was for a long time free from the enemy. Ehud is called the second Judge.

Another hero of these early days, classed as a Judge, too, was SHAMGAR. All we know of him is that he slew ever so many Philistines with an ox-goad. (We shall hear a good deal of these Philistines presently.) An ox-goad is a strong pike pointed with iron, still in use in Palestine. The story shows that the weapons of Israel were very crude and their warfare very rough-and-ready. While the well-trained

Canaanites had war-chariots, Israel had to fight on foot. It was often a very unequal contest between trained warriors and rough mountaineers. But Israel had faith and courage and defied chariots and fortifications.

How it happened that some tribes chose DEBORAH to be their Judge, we do not know. She must have been a remarkable woman in many ways. She was more truly a Judge than any of those so far mentioned and was something better still. For the people flocked to her to decide their disputes, to help them in their troubles, to give "wise answers"—even to tell them God's will! Her only court-room was a palm tree. Under that tree she sat giving to those who called words of advice and wisdom.

The Hebrews had always held woman in higher esteem than any of the nations around them. For in olden days women were despised, their true worth not understood. Perhaps because they could not fight; and in such rough and stormy times strength and bravery were valued most. It is pleasant to think that our ancestors were among the first to treat woman with gentleness and regard and to think more highly of her in every way. But it has taken a very long time and a very hard struggle to win for her the true place in the world that God wishes her to fill.

But great dangers were ahead. A new enemy had appeared more threatening than any that had gone

before. What could a woman do at such a wild and stirring time? We shall see.

Is all fair in love and war?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Even in the violence of war, honor must never be forgotten. Analyze the act of Ehud from this point of view. (Judges iii 1 - 30).

The iron chariots were not made entirely of iron. Iron was rare and costly. Most weapons were of flint.

See Prov. xxxi. in Appendix to this Volume. Find from Bible other texts speaking in praise and honor of woman—*i. e.*, "A gracious woman retaineth honor." Proverbs xi. 16; "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband," xii. 4; also Is. xlix. 15. and Prov. xiv. 1.

The Rabbis have uttered many beautiful sayings about women. Some of these are:

"No wife—no man."

"A man should not afflict his wife, for God counts her tears."

"I call my wife—home, for she indeed makes my home.

"If thy wife be of small stature, stoop and speak gently."

"Everything can be replaced but the wife of thy youth."

"When both parents are in danger or prison, the mother must be saved first."

"Love thy wife as thyself, honor her more than thyself."

CHAPTER X.

"A MOTHER IN ISRAEL."

BIBLE TEXT: **"Deal courageously and the Lord be with the good."** *2 Chronicles xix 11.*

Although Joshua had defeated some northern chiefs at the "Waters of Merom" with Jabin, King of Hazor,

at their head—they gradually won back their old power. Hazor was the centre of a very powerful Canaanite state. Now, a later Jabin of Hazor overruns the country with his chariots and horses. He held the whole Plain of Jezreel, between Mount Carmel and Mount Gilboa, and thus had command of the main road between north and south, as well as control of all the seacoast trade. This enabled him to tax the products of the people. Steadily he and his forces approached further south, until the Israelites were afraid to travel on the highways. The flocks and the fields were plundered, while confusion and terror spread on all sides. The people hardly dared venture out on the highways, but slunk stealthily along the by-paths. Still they were entirely unprepared to take the field against Jabin, for they had neither spears nor swords. Daily their sufferings increased and they began to give way to despair What hero would come forward and brave the enemy? But this time Israel's savior was not to be a man, but Deborah, "a mother in Israel."

Although women cannot themselves lead men to war, they can awaken their bravery and inspire them to go forth to meet their enemies. When Deborah heard of the miseries of her people under Jabin's oppressions from the lips of those who came down to her from the north for refuge. she was not content to sit quietly under her palm tree in Ephraim. She was a woman of action as well of thought. She was

a religious woman, too, and she felt God's message bidding her rise and save her people.

She knew that if the Israelites had only a brave leader, they would follow him to battle. She must find one. She sent to the tribe of Naphtali—the tribe most severely oppressed—and commanded Barak, one of its chiefs, to gather an army and meet the dread enemy. But even Barak hesitated. He looked at the brave woman, whom nothing could frighten, and said to her, "If thou wilt go with me I will go, but if thou wilt not go with me I will not go." So much did he rely on her moral support to inspire his soldiers.

"I will surely go with you," said Deborah. The war-cry spread from tribe to tribe until nearly all northern Israel was in the field—Naphtali, Zebulun, Issachar, Ephraim, Benjamin—follow them in this order on the map along the western bank of the Jordan. Not all the tribes answered the cry. Dan and Asher were too busy with their ships, Reuben with his flocks. But still it was a union for common action of the largest number of tribes so far.

At Kedesh, Deborah and Barak with some ten thousand men marched toward Mount Tabor. Sisera, captain of Jabin's army, hastened to the river Kishon, which you will find at the foot of Carmel on Zebulun's border. So, between Kishon and Tabor, in the plain of Jezreel, the armies met.

Sisera had nine-hundred chariots. In ancient war-

fare they would sometimes fasten scythes to these chariots and drive them right through the ranks of the enemy, cutting them down and spreading disorder and confusion. But Israel, though on foot, met them like a solid wall that could not be broken. When they rushed forward to the attack, the Canaanites fell fast before them. A panic seized them, and the frightened horses, dashing at each other, overturned many of the chariots, dragging or trampling the riders to death. The advantage was now clearly with the Israelites, unhampered by chariot or horse. A heavy rainstorm came on and made it particularly uncomfortable for the riders, hampering their retreat. They became entangled in the swamp and were swept down by the torrent. The remnant of the vast army, thoroughly dispirited, fled in all directions.

In the midst of the tumult, Sisera escaped. He sought refuge in the tent of a Bedouin family with whom he was at peace—Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite; although the Kenites were closely related to the Israelites through the family of Moses and were allies of Judah. However, Jael welcomed him and gave him some refreshing milk. So, relying on that ancient hospitality, which taught one should never injure those they feed and shelter, the exhausted man fell asleep. But Jael, forgetting this duty, took the opportunity to slay him with one of the iron pins used to fasten down the tent. We cannot excuse this cruel act, even though committed to help the

oppressed Israelites. Deborah praised her, but we cannot. Notice the question at the end of the last chapter.

Next to the battle of Beth-Horon (see Chap. V.) this was the most crushing defeat the Canaanites had met with at the hands of the Israelites. They were steadily getting the mastery of Palestine, driving their enemies off their borders further and further away.

A great song of triumph did Deborah sing at this victory, for she was a poet, too. Here are some of its verses:

Because the princes took the lead in Israel,
Because the people offered themselves willingly,
Praise ye the Lord.
Hear, O ye kings, give ear, O ye princes,
I, even I, will sing unto the Lord
I will sing praise to the Lord, the God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath,
The highways were deserted
And the travellers walked through winding paths.
The rulers ceased,—they ceased in Israel
Until I, Deborah, arose,
That I arose, a mother in Israel.

Then war was at the gates,
But was there a spear or a sword seen
Among the forty thousand of Israel?
My heart goeth forth to Israel's leaders.
The willing champions of the people.

Awake Deborah, utter a song,
Arise, Barak, and lead thy prisoners captive.

Then came down a remnant of the people's nobles
Out of Ephraim came they down,
After thee Benjamin, with thy hosts,
Out of Machir came the governors,
And out of Zebulun men wielding a commander's staff.
The princes of Issachar were with Deborah.

Reuben, why satest thou among thy sheepfolds,
And Dan, why did he remain in ships.
Asher sat still at the haven of the sea.

Zebulun was the people that threw away life to death,
Naphtali, too, on the heights of the field.
Kings came and fought,
Then fought the kings of Canaan.
Kishon's stream swept them away.

So perish all Thine enemies, oh Lord!
But those that love Him are like the sun,
Rising in its strength.

What is woman's best work in the world?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Explain each reference in Deborah's song.

Tell the story of Joan of Arc and compare her with Deborah.

Give instances where a good and brave woman has inspired a great man:—for example, behind Mahomet we see Kedisha, behind Rabbi Akiba we see Kalba Sabua's daughter, etc.

Can a woman use her influence for ill? Yes; tell of Jezebel (Vol. III.), Cleopatra and, in fiction, Lady Macbeth.

God has given us all—men and women, boys and girls—certain capacities which we should use to bring light and blessing into the lives of those about us.

CHAPTER XI.

GIDEON'S CALL.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands: O Israel, trust in the Eternal: He is their help and their shield."** *Psalm cxv. 4, 9.*

When the Bible again takes up the story of this period, Israel has met new oppressors—the Midianites of the Arabian Desert. These Bedouins or wandering Arabs, with their tents and their camels, were attracted during harvest time by the rich pastures of Israel and by their defenceless condition. So they would come west from the steppes, *i e.*, barren land between the Jordan and the Euphrates, and would spread over the country down as far as Gaza.

Run your finger across the map from Bashan to Gaza.

> They destroyed the produce of the earth and left no sustenance in Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor ass. They were as locusts for multitude; both they and their camels were without number.

The Israelites had to flee from the plain and take refuge in the hills, in fissures of the rocks, in craggy peaks, and in limestone caves.

The western half of Menasseh was the worst sufferer from these robber bands A young man named GIDEON saw his brothers captured and cruelly put to death. He alone was left to mourn them, and to avenge their murder.

One of the prophets—in order of religious teachers of whom we shall hear more later on—took the opportunity offered by this time of distress to urge Israel to put away their idols and turn their hearts to God. He tried to show them, too, how misfortune very often comes from the evil practices of idolatry. For the Israelites were worshiping the gods of the Canaanites and were bowing down to the *Asherim*—wooden poles set up in the name of the goddess Astarte. They were learning some of those strange customs in which their heathen neighbors indulged in the name of religion. Perhaps we had better say they had not yet unlearned them. They hardly listened to the prophet, whose name is not given; but Gideon thought long over the words of rebuke and warning.

One night while threshing corn by stealth in an underground wine press—he dared not do it openly for fear of the lawless Midianites—the burning words of the prophet came back to him. While these godly thoughts were upon him, he looked out into the darkness—and, what does he see near his father's oak tree? Surely it is an angel, come at the very hour needed! The strange visitor spoke:

> "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor; go in this thy might and save Israel from the hand of Midian."

Full of surprise and awe, Gideon answers, "Not me. I am not a Moses to rescue Israel. My family is the

poorest in Menasseh and I am the least in my father's house."

> "Surely I will be with thee and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."

The mysterious messenger is gone. But Gideon is now resolved; yes, he *will* strike a blow for his people's liberty. But he saw that he must first defeat the enemy within, before he could attack the enemy without. The enemy *within* was idol worship.

With the feeling of the divine call still strong upon him, he threw down the altar of Baal that his own father had made, cut down the Asherim and built an altar to the true God. How strongly this conduct reminds us of the story of Abraham breaking his father's images! Next morning every one asked, "Who has done this thing?" "Gideon, the son of Joash," was the reply. "Bring out thy son that he may die." But the true religious feeling of the son seemed now to have touched the father through his paternal love, so he said:

> "Need you plead for Baal? if he be a god let him plead for himself, because one hath broken down his altar."

The people were silenced by the rebuke, for their consciences whispered the answer that *since Baal could not plead he could not be God.* Thus Gideon's first victory was won. It was remembered in a name that was afterwards given him -*Jerub-Baal*, which means "let Baal plead."

He now prepared to attack the enemy *without.* He

was going to fight the desert outlaws, not for conquest but only for defence. He wished to protect the peaceful Israelite peasants from the Amalekite and Midianite robbers.

A large and somewhat unmanageable throng soon gathered at his call in the Plain of Jezreel near the Hill of Moreh—men from Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali and Menasseh. But they were too many, and not all of the right sort for his purpose. He did not want many soldiers, but a few picked true men. He therefore bade all who felt afraid to go home. More than half went away. But he still thought he had too many, and he finally chose those best fitted in an unexpected way. When they reached a brook to drink water, some just stood on the bank, made a cup of their hands and lapped the water from them. The others greedily threw themselves on their knees and plunged their mouths into the water. Gideon chose the three hundred who drank in the careful but less comfortable way, deciding that they would be better able to stand the hardships of camp life and the privations and dangers of warfare. Again, those who remained standing on the lookout, showed they were more eager for battle. We can tell character from very small things.

That night the brave Gideon with his servant crept along the outskirts of the Midianite camp to find out their situation. Listening, as he crouched, he heard one man tell his dream to his companion:

"I dreamed a dream, and lo! a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian and came into the tent and smote it that it fell." His companion said, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon."

When Gideon heard this, he felt much encouraged; for it showed that his enemies were afraid of him.

What is the meaning of "not by might . . . . but by My spirit"?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Gideon modestly fears that, coming from an obscure family, he is unfit to become a redeemer of Israel. A man is not great because of his ancestry.

Explain the proverb, "non multa sed multum" (not many but much).

Gideon reducing his army to three hundred reminds us of the 300 Spartans who so bravely defended the Pass of Thermopylæ. Compare also the gallant Six Hundred at Balaclava, in Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade."

In Deuteronomy xx. 1-9, we are told in detail those who were to be excused from battle.

Jerubbaal may have another signification. It may point to the time when people called their children Baal, not thinking it wrong then to recognize Baal and the God of Israel as well! It was going to take, oh, so long, to unlearn that. Read Is. xl. from verse. 12.

Whenever we are in great trouble and can bear our trials no longer, then God always sends His angel to us as He did to Gideon

In every age, not excepting our own, Palestine has been troubled by raids from these Bedouins of the desert, who seek not the land, but the produce.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REJECTED CROWN.

BIBLE TEXT: **"A soft answer turneth away wrath, but a grievous word stirreth up anger."** *Proverbs xv. 1.*

Gideon gave to each man a trumpet and an empty pitcher in which a lighted torch was concealed. At a given signal each man blew his trumpet, smashed his pitcher, waved his torch and shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." The enemy was surprised and alarmed. From this sudden series of noises it seemed as though many thousands were upon them; this was just the impression Gideon wished to create. Their camels, frightened at the lights, ran wildly about. At the next trumpet blast they were almost crazed with panic: Gideon's men had hardly moved, but the Midanites were fleeing toward the Jordan as fast as they could. In their flight and fear they began slaying each other, for in the darkness they could not tell friend from foe. The valiant men of Gideon followed the retreating enemy in hot pursuit. Many from the neighboring tribes now swarmed from their camps and took up the chase with them. Thus ended the first battle.

Gideon now sent a war-cry to all the hill-country of Ephraim to gather at the waters of Beth Barah and cut off the flight of the enemy. Many answered the call and soon captured Oreb and Zeeb, the princes of

Midian. They were put to death on the Rock of Oreb (Raven Rock), which gave its name to this, the second, battle.

The Ephraimites felt a little jealous at Gideon's first victory and said:

> "Why hast thou served us thus that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with Midian?" And they did chide with himsharply. Gideon [modestly] answered, "What, now, have I done in comparison with you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God delivered unto your hand Oreb and Zeeb? What was I able to do compared with that?"

Gideon was of the family of Abiezer, hence the reference; how slightingly he speaks of all that he had done While his praise of Ephraim soon soothed their anger, another man, proud, quarrelsome or self-important, might have stirred up bitter strife by a sharp answer in return. But Gideon was wonderfully gifted with prudence and self-control.

But the war was not quite over yet. On went Gideon, followed by his gallant three hundred, "faint yet pursuing." Soon they had crossed the Jordan, and here Gideon asked the people of Succoth and Penuel to give food to his exhausted men; but they were too much afraid of the Midianites to help their own. Threatening them with severe punishment on his return, he pushed forward with his men. Two more chiefs, Zebah and Zalmunna, were overtaken "Had you spared the lives of my brothers, I swear I would have spared yours," he said to them before

putting them to death. The men of the two inhospitable towns also felt the weight of his anger. The success of the war was now complete, and Israel was free and at peace once more.

Gideon asked the people to gather all the gold of the spoil. They willingly handed it to him. It was all worked up into a figure that he, perhaps, only intended as a trophy of the victory. Nevertheless, the people worshiped it as an idol. Perhaps they knew no better. Let us hesitate before we condemn.

The anger of Ephraim at not being called earlier, which Gideon had so cleverly smoothed down, brings out a fact we have been trying to impress that the separate tribes of Israel were hardly yet united as one people that felt it had a common cause. But Gideon by his superiority in so many ways, brought about a much nearer approach to a national unity than had existed for a long time past or was likely to exist for some time to come.

They felt so grateful to him for the victory and the freedom he had won them that they even wanted to make him their king.

> "Rule thou over us, thou and thy son and thy son's son, for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian."

Gideon nobly declined it. "Not I, nor my son—but God shall reign over you." He was a true patriot and fought for the freedom of his people, not for the glory of himself.

So, when the war was over and Gideon saw that his

people were safe, he quietly went back to his house. Do you remember that Washington, having saved his country in the great war for independence, modestly returned to Mount Vernon? It is instructive to notice these repetitions in history. They give us a clearer idea of men and times So, when you read the life of Oliver Cromwell, who declined the throne of England, I hope you will not forget Gideon, who declined the throne of Israel.

What is the meaning of "Thy gentleness hath made me great"?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Apply Ps. xviii. 35 to Gideon.

Gideon is also a title and means a "hewer." Similar titles have been given to illustrious warriors. Judas *Maccabeus*, "the hammer;" Charles *Martel*, another word for hammer; Richard *Cœur de Lion*—the "lion-hearted."

The Egyptian armies still use earthen jars to cover their lights, when traveling by night; and Gideon's scheme was applied in battle by the Arabs not so long ago.

Tradition says that Moses also refused a crown. Cæsar declined a crown three times, but the sincerity of his refusal is questioned—"he was loath to lay his fingers off it." So he is warningly held up to us as a man whom ambition ruined. See Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," Act III., Scene II. Contrast also with Gideon, Alexander and Napoleon, who wished to conquer many lands only to satisfy their pride and glory. Make of all these references a lesson on ambition. Find other instances of honors rejected for principle.

Read Ps. lxxxiii. to v. 13.

"Gideon's band" has come to mean a small body of brave men.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE "THORN-BUSH" KING.

BIBLE TEXT: **"He that soweth iniquity shall reap calamity."** *Proverbs xxii. 8.*

Gideon left many sons behind him. One of them, ABIMELECH, was very fond of power. He liked it better than duty. In fact, he did not mind what crimes he committed, as long as he could get what he wanted.

On the death of his father he hurried to Shechem, on the northern border of Ephraim where his mother's family lived—and persuaded the people to make him a king. In order to silence all opposition, he bribed some vain and light fellows to slay his brothers. But one of them, Jotham, who had something of his father's character, escaped.

When Jotham saw that Abimelech had won a crown by his wickedness, while his father had declined one in his righteousness, he felt dreadfully disheartened at the condition of things and at the outlook for the people. He came to Shechem, and standing on one of the heights of Gerizim, where all could see and hear him, he tried to point out what a mistake they had made. So he told them a fable. In olden times a fable or parable was a favorite means of teaching an important lesson. Here is Jotham's:

> "Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you. The trees went forth to anoint a king over them. They said to the olive tree, 'Reign thou over us.' But the olive tree answered, 'Should I leave my fat-

ness with which all honor God and man, just to wave to and fro over the trees?' Then they said to the fig tree, 'Reign thou over us.' But the fig tree said, 'Should I leave my sweetness and my good fruit to go and wave over the trees?' Then to the vine said they 'Reign thou over us.' But the vine also replied, 'Should I leave my wine which cheereth God and man, in order to wave to and fro over the trees?' Then all the trees said to the thorn-bush 'Reign thou over us.' It said, 'If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow, and if not, let fire come outof the thorn-bush and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'"

I am sure you can see the meaning of this story at once: the worthy Gideon could best serve his people by working and fighting for them, not by sitting on a beautiful throne and wearing a golden crown. But the worthless Abimelech cared only for these empty honors, not for the welfare of his nation. He was the thorn-bush which produces no fruit, offers no shade, easily catches fire and then consumes the precious trees.

Still, the people took very little notice of Jotham's lesson. Some just shook their heads and went away. But they very soon tired of their new king, who showed himself a tyrant. He had few friends and many enemies. Altogether it was a sad reign of conspiracy, bloodshed and civil war. The throne obtained by force had to be upheld by injustice.

Jotham's warning that "fire would come out of the thorn-bush and devour all the trees," was being sadly fulfilled. The worthless king destroyed many of his

people. He undid the good his father had begun. He kept back Israel's progress in government and in morals, and in friendly union. His example led to the spread of idolatry and the weakness that always went with it. Thus, under a bad king, it was a wild time Bands of robbers on the mountains, encouraged by Abimelech, would plunder peaceful travelers. Indeed Abimelech acted more like a Canaanite than an Israelite, and Shechem, his capital, was a half-Canaanite city.

At last even the people of Shechem, the only persons who really acknowledged his kingship, could put up with him no longer. Secret plans were laid for his overthrow. So, when a patriot, named Gaal, came with a force of men against Abimelech, the Shechemites received him with open arms. But Abimelech was a match for Gaal. He stole up in the night with four bands of men, drove back Gaal, slew the people of Shechem and sowed the place with salt. Some took refuge in the hold of a tower used as a shrine, thinking that he surely would not attack them there. But Abimelech cared not for sanctuaries, so he set fire to it and cruelly burnt them all.

But at the next stronghold at Thebez, which he attacked and also tried to burn, a stone cast by a woman ended his violent life. With the death of their king, the struggle ended, and the people quietly returned to their homes. Shechem, which was destroyed in the struggle, was rebuilt as a Hebrew

city. Thus a dangerous league between Israelites and Canaanites (Shechemites), which would have strengthened idolatry, was broken in time. Also the Shechem temple of the idol El-Berith was changed into a sanctuary to the God of Israel.

Does the throne honor the man or must the man honor the throne?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

From some of the heights of Gerizim almost overhanging Shechem, the voice can be heard over a wide expanse and even on the opposite Mount Ebal.

Shechem, being an open road between two mountains to the Jordan or to the sea, became a popular centre from earliest times.

While a little salt renders soil fertile, too much makes it barren. So "to sow a land with salt" was to make it useless and desolate. One of the Roman Emperors, determining that Jerusalem should never be rebuilt, sowed salt on its foundations. This too was done in Milan, 1162; and in this way France treated the house of a traitor.

Read Æsop's Fable, "The Frogs who asked for a King."

Read "The Bramble" ("Book of Flowers," Chap xv. Hodder & Stought on, London.)

CHAPTER XIV.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Be not rash with thy mouth and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God."**
Ecclesiastes v. 2

After the death of Abimelech the Bible gives a bare mention of two Judges, or rather leaders—To'a and

Jair. The Ammonites now began to press hard on Israel, and again they looked round for a brave warrior. In selecting JEPHTHAH they were not exactly fortunate in their choice, although he was both daring and successful. For he was little better than a freebooter, that is one who wanders about for plunder. But the times were lawless at best, and freebooters then were considered no more dishonorable than were pirates in the early days of Greece or robber knights in the Middle Ages.

Still, that a man like Jephthah should be made a leader in Israel shows a decline from the days of Gideon. But affairs were desperate The Ammonites, the latest troublers of Israel's peace, not only swarmed over Gilead into the lands of Reuben, Gad and Menasseh, but were crossing the Jordan to attack the tribes on the other side. The people, in despair, were willing to make any man "head over all the inhabitants of Gilead" who would undertake the command against the enemy. Jephthah, who had also come from the troubled district of Gilead, had been treated as an outcast, so he was very independent about accepting the call. But they promised to make him their chief, so he consented

Jephthah first sent a peaceable message to the enemy, asking why they sought lands that Israel had fairly conquered in war years and years before. But the king of Ammon coveted this fruitful land, so there was no resource but war

Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord and said, "If thou wilt indeed, deliver the children of Ammon into my hand, then it shall be, whatever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me when I return, it shall be the Lord's. I will offer it up for a burnt offering."

Such vows were very common among the ancients, Israelites as well as others. A vow is made in connection with Samson, of whom you will read presently. You will also be told of a vow against Benjamin. Later still, Hannah, the mother of Samuel, makes a vow.

Jephthah's vow was wrong in every respect. In the first place, we cannot make a bargain with God. One must not say, for instance, "If I succeed, I will live a religious life" Such promises are both wrong and useless. *We must do our duty without conditions.* And even though we do what is right, we must not, therefore, suppose that we are sure to be prosperous. In the second place, Jephthah's vow was rash. He knew not of what he spoke, for he knew not what he would meet first. He had in mind, of course, a herd of cattle.

To turn to the battle: it was a fierce struggle, indeed, and bravely did the men of Gilead fight for their hearths and homes. Jephthah completely defeated his enemies in twenty cities and returned home rejoicing

Now, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrel, and with dances. She was his only child. And it came to pass when Jephthah saw her that he rent his clothes and said: "Alas, my daughter thou hast brought me very

low, for I have opened my mouth to the Lord and I cannot go back." But she said: "My father, thou hast opened thy mouth to the Lord; do with me according to thy word."

Wild, indeed, were the times that permitted such vows to be fulfilled or even to be made. But the people were so ignorant that they feared some calamity would happen if they did not carry out their sworn promises. They mistook a superstitious demand for a religious duty. But even in a mistaken cause one can often be generous and heroic. See that brave girl, that dutiful daughter, willing to be sacrificed to save her father and her people from a possible misfortune

Still, we are not quite sure of what became of her. To slay her seems too dreadful for the humane spirit of Israel to permit, even in those days. Some think that her sacrifice consisted simply in remaining unmarried all her life. For that was then considered both an affliction and a reproach. Her name was long remembered, but we do not know it now.

The Ephraimites were again jealous of another tribe's success and complained that they were not called to take part in the battle and triumph against Ammon This was not true, and so Jephthah told them But he lacked the mild forbearance of Gideon to appease their displeasure. Whether from this cause or from another not stated, civil war followed, and the Ephraimites certainly got the worst of it. A civil

war is a struggle between two parties in one nation, such as our War of the Rebellion (1861–'65). Civil wars are always the saddest, for men are called upon to slay their own countrymen There was great slaughter of the Ephraimites at the fords of the Jordan. They were detected by their difference of speech, pronouncing *Shibboleth—Sibboleth* After this outbreak had been quelled, the land had peace for many years.

Need we keep a promise made to ourselves?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

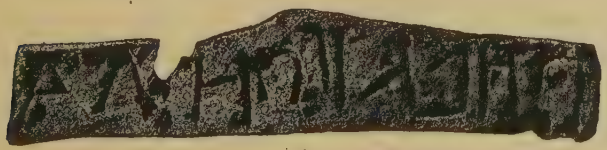
Vows were very common among the Phœnicians. Hasdrubal of Carthage made his son Hannibal vow everlasting enmity against Rome.

To rejoice with timbrel and dance was an ancient custom of the Israelites; Miriam so rejoiced at Israel's triumph over the Egyptians.

Tell the story of Iphigenia from the Greek mythology.

Read Vol. I., Chapter xliv., "Conquests East of the Jordan."

Read poem, "Jephthah's Daughter," Byron. Read Eccles. x. 1–6.



BOUNDARY STONE INSCRIBED "TEHUM GEZER."

CHAPTER XV.

SAMSON THE STRONG.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Let not the mighty man glory in his might . . . but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Eternal, who exerciseth loving kindness righteousness and judgment on the earth."**

Jeremiah ix.23.

We have now reached another gap in these early annals of Israel, which is only filled up by a passing reference to Ibzan, Elon and Abdon. They must have been of some service to the people for their names to have been remembered. They probably lived in times of peace—in those happy days when nothing happens.

But after this uneventful quiet Israel was to meet an enemy with whom they would be in conflict for many, many years—the PHILISTINES They were in no way related to the Canaanites, but were of a different race. They had hardly come in contact with Israel so far, except when repulsed by Shamgar. But, as we shall now hear of them very often, let us find out something about them. They were sometimes called "strangers" or emigrants, for they reached Egypt from Asia Minor and from Crete, an island in the Mediterranean. There they learned Grecian arts and manners. Like the Cretans, they were mercenaries, *i. e* , men who hire themselves out as soldiers to whatever country pays them. They

were noted for their strength and for the variety of their armor, and, like many of the nations around Israel, they had war-horses and iron chariots. Still, they were said to be dull and stupid; certainly "Philistine" means that to-day. Like most of the Semitic (see Note) peoples, they worshiped their gods in pairs. Their chief idol was made in the shape of a fish and was called Dagon (Hebrew *dag*-fish). So they probably believed that the sea was the home of their gods.

They now began coming up into Palestine from Egypt, and gradually spread up that broad strip of low land along the Mediterranean coast. Their chief cities were Askelon, right on the sea, Gaza and Ashdod, which you will find near the shore line, and Ekron and Gath more in the interior. These five towns formed a confederacy. Soon they so completely overran the borders of the Israelites that some of the tribes became partly subject to them. This was not an unmixed evil, for it compelled the Israelites to unite more closely to overthrow the common enemy, and was one of the causes that helped to make Israel one solid nation a little later on. They also learnt from their enemies, the Philistines, a good deal about conducting war and organizing an army.

The name of the hero who now dared to attack these powerful enemies was—SAMSON. He belonged to the tribe of Dan—the least settled of all the tribes. Samson stands somewhat alone and can hardly

be compared to any other of Israel's leaders. He was renowned for his remarkable strength; and already in his youth, in the Danite camps at Zorah and Eshtaol, he would show his wonderful power.

Strange stories are told of his birth—that an angel appeared to Manoah and his wife and told them that a son would be given them. They had long given up the hope of their home being brightened by the sunny laughter of children, for no little feet had pattered round their tent. So, when Samson came to bless their declining years, there was as much rejoicing as when Isaac was born to the delighted Abraham and Sarah.

They vowed that he should be a Nazarite from his birth. A Nazarite was one who abstained from many of the pleasures of the people, to lead a holy life; one who also never drank wine nor touched a dead body nor permitted his hair to be cut. But Samson hardly fulfilled this hope of his parents, except in letting his hair grow. He was not the kind of person to care for a saintly life; for he was a wild boy and fond of fun, and I am afraid his parents spoiled him.

His remarkable strength soon showed itself. One day, when out in the woods, he met a lion, no unusual thing in those unsettled districts. Without a weapon, he grasped it with his two mighty hands and tore it open "as one would tear a kid." On turning back to the carcass of the lion a little later, he found that the hot sun had dried it up into a mere skeleton and

that a swarm of bees had made honey there. He gathered the honey and brought it to his parents. But he did not tell them he had slain a lion—it was to him too slight an affair to be worth mentioning.

Although the Philistines were Israel's enemies and were holding them in subjection, the wayward young man would not be satisfied until his parents had obtained as a wife for him a Philistine maiden who had pleased his fancy. They tried to persuade him to marry a daughter from his own people; but it was of no avail, he would have his way. He made a feast in honor of his marriage and invited a number of young Philistines Remembering how the bees had made honey in the body of a lion he had slain, he thought he would make a riddle of the story for the entertainment of the company. It is an Eastern custom to propound riddles at weddings. So he said, "If you guess it during the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty linen shirts and thirty robes of state; if you cannot guess it you must give as much to me." "Put forth thy riddle," they answered. This is the way Samson put it:

"Out of the eater came forth meat;
Out of the strong came forth sweetness."

Since they did not know the adventure with the lion, of course they could not guess the riddle. This provoked them very much and they told his wife, if she did not find out the answer for them, they would burn her and her father's house. In dreadful fright

she at last persuaded Samson to tell her what it meant, and then told it to the young men. The answer was worded in this way:

> "What is stronger than a lion?
> What is sweeter than honey?"

But when Samson learnt that the young men had forced the answer from his wife, he angrily cried:

> "If ye had not ploughed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle."

In great passion he went down to Askelon, one of the Philistine cities, and attacked it single-handed; many of the Philistines were slain. He asked for his wife, but they would not give her up again. He now resolved to punish them further, and his method showed that grim humor which was part of his character. He caught three hundred jackels, tied them in pairs, tail to tail, with a burning torch between each pair, and then drove them into the wheatfields of the Philistines and into their olive yards. Of course, the sheaves and trees all caught fire and were reduced to ashes The furious Philistines, in blind revenge at the insult and the injury, set fire to the house of the woman who had been his wife and burnt her with her family. This gave Samson another excuse for attacking them; he met them in the fields and many fell before his blows. I hardly know who was the more savage, Samson or his foes.

How can we best learn from our enemies?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Give instances from history of nations and individuals learning lessons from their opponents. After the Romans had conquered the Greeks, the Greek became their teachers; Israel learnt many lessons from the Egyptians.

Kaphtor may be the Bible name for Crete.

"Semitic." There is a popular division of the peoples of the earth into three races, named after the sons of Noah. It was supposed that Shem was the father of the people of Asia (Semites), Japhet, of Europe, Ham, of Africa "Semitic" is still applied to many Eastern races.

Read "Philistines and their Cities" ("Historical Geography of Holy Land," Smith, chap. ix.)

Read Note on "Nazarites," p. 147, Vol. I.

The order of Nazarites, perhaps founded by Samuel, was closely allied to the order of Prophets in their abstaining from many worldly pleasures. (See Amos ii. 11.)

Read "Wife of Manoah to her Husband," Whittier, "Readings and Recitations," p. 73.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FALL OF SAMSON.

BIBLE TEXT: **"He whose spirit is without restraint is like a city that is broken down and hath no wall."**
Proverbs xxv. 28.

Samson's boldness alarmed Israel as much as it enraged the Philistines. They tried to reason with him:

"Dost thou not know that the Philistines are rulers over us, what is this that thou hast done unto us?"

Their alarm was not without cause for the Philis-

tines now gathered a large army and threatened to attack the men of Judah unless they gave up Samson. To save his brethren, Samson told them he would let them bind him with strong ropes, if they promised not to injure him. They did as he bade them, and reluctantly handed him over to the enemy.

The Philistines rejoiced when they saw their powerful foe in their hands at last. But they did not know that they had "caught a Tartar." With his giant strength Samson broke his bonds, and picking up the first thing that came into his hand—the jawbone of an ass—he began slaying his tormentors "hip and thigh." They fled from him in dismay.

Many more stories have come down to us of the wonderful strength of Samson. Once shut up in the city of Gaza, he tore up the gates of the city, posts and all, and carried them away on his back.

But his fall was near at hand. Unfortunately he went again to the land of his enemies to seek a wife, and fell in love with a woman named Delilah. She married him, but she proved a traitress and was his undoing. The lords of the Philistines persuaded her to entice from her husband the secret of his strength, and as a reward for betraying him, each promised her eleven hundred pieces of silver.

The wicked woman consented. It was a long time before she could find out where his marvelous power lay, since he put her off with false pretexts several times. At first he said he could be securely bound

with green twigs; then by new ropes; and then by fastening his hair to the wall. She tried each, and each time he broke the fetters like burnt threads.

At last her persistence was too much for him and the secret came out. He told her that his strength lay in his hair, which had never been cut since his birth. She knew she had the truth now. She secretly called the Philistines, received the promised bribe and had his hair cut off while he was asleep in her lap. "The Philistines are upon thee," she called out mockingly. He awoke, thinking he would go out as before, only to find that his strength was gone. They bound him with fetters of brass, cruelly put out his eyes, and made him grind corn in prison. This was considered the meanest occupation, and was only given to a woman slave.

The Philistines were merry at their success and offered sacrifices to Dagon, their idol. Then said they: "Call for Samson that he may make us sport" The blind man was led among the rejoicing, jeering throng. The temple was crowded with thousands, including the highest in the land, eager to see the fallen hero. Sick of his wasted life, Samson only wanted to punish his enemies and die. His hair had grown again while in prison, and he found his old strength coming back. So, when all the merriment was at its height, he grasped the two pillars on which the whole temple was supported, and with one mighty

pull, he tore them down—crash—hurling unto death that vast gathering, and dying himself among them.

Strong as Samson was in his muscles, just so weak was he in his will He was like an overgrown child, playful, impulsive, careless, revengeful, savage. He had not the patience or the self-control to organize a regular army or to lead his people successfully against their foes. He trifled away his strength, because it was unschooled and not properly directed. He lacked the earnestness of Joshua, the self-restraint of Gideon, the moral force of Deborah, even the determination of Jephthah. And as we close the stirring but sad story, we are sorry to confess that it tells of a life that failed.

What kind of men are most helpful to the world?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Compare Hercules with Samson; the first of the twelve "Labors of Hercules" was an encounter with the Nemean lion.

In the early, rough ages, when men had to cut their way through the forest and grapple with wild beasts, brute strength was more needed than in this gentler age that calls for higher qualities. But even in those rude times, mere force was of little value without moral power behind it. Jeremiah was not renowned for strength, and yet his unflinching courage in God's cause earned him the title of "brazen wall." "Wisdom is better than strength," Eccles. ix. 16. "He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city," Prov. xvi. 32.

Samson can hardly be called a Judge in any sense. He never led Israel to war. He stands alone, fighting his own battles to gratify his own revenge.

Delilah has left a bad reputation behind her; her name to-day is a synonym for "traitress."

The Rabbis say that Samson was punished with the loss of his eyes because he did not use them wisely—he sought for wives women that were beautiful, instead of women that were good.

Read "Death of Samson," Milton (Readings and Recitations, p. 77).

CHAPTER XVII

"THERE WAS NO KING IN ISRAEL."

BIBLE TEXT: **"Beware lest thou forget the Eternal thy God, in not keeping his commandments and his judgments."** *Deuteronomy viii. 2.*

The heading of this chapter is repeated very often in the Book of Judges. I suppose that the historian of this period, who certainly must have lived in the latter days, when Israel *had* its kings, tries in this way to explain the wild and lawless condition of the times. He often tells us that "each man did what was right in his own eyes."

And in the "eyes" of some, very strange things were thought "right." For instance, we find a young man, Micah, who lived among the hills of Ephraim, setting up a little shrine in his home, in which he placed a teraphim. This was probably a figure in the shape of a man, though it was not considered an idol by the Israelites. He engaged the services of a passing Levite to act as priest, as the Levites were the religious

teachers of the people. He clothed him with the priestly garment called ephod, and then supposed that everything would now go well with him! Some Danite adventurers whose possessions on the Philistine border were very uncertain, were wandering through the land to see where they could find a settlement (they finally settled down in the far north at Laish). While on their way, hearing of Micah's sanctuary, they entered, stole the teraphim and ephod, and persuaded the Levite to go with them and become the priest of their tribe. These people, wild and untaught as yet, must have looked upon the image as nothing less than a talisman—a charm that would keep off evil. For how could they expect to win God's protection and favor by such lawless means? What a strange mixture of good and evil is this story of those old, old times.

But there is a darker picture still. A hospitable old man invited a stranger and his wife, passing through Gibeah of Benjamin, to spend the night in his home, out of danger from robbers and outlaws, who generally infest unsettled countries. There were no public inns in those days, the traveler relied on the kindness of private persons. A wild mob of Benjaminites, who remind us strongly of the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, seized the stranger's wife and treated her so brutally that she died of the injuries.

The outraged husband sent word to all the tribes of Israel to avenge this wrong Stirred by the shocking

story, all the people gathered "as one man" at Mizpeh. Mizpeh, built on a hill in Benjamin, was a great place of assembly on all occasions of national importance or danger. At first they sent word to the tribe of Benjamin, bidding them peaceably to give up these "men of Belial"—base fellows—to justice. But in an unwise moment the Benjaminites took up the cause of the scoundrels, forgetting their sin, and thinking only of tribal friendship. Thus, by their blind partisanship, they brought on their country a civil war. The other tribes wept to think that they should have to go to battle against their own brethren—the Benjaminites.

The battle took place at Gibeah, the scene of the outrage. At first the Israelites were repulsed; but soon the fortunes of war turned, and the obstinate Benjaminites fell with fearful slaughter, until, it is said, not a thousand men were left. These fled and hid in the rocks. Thus did the sin of a few bring this awful calamity upon thousands. How often it is so!

At the height of their anger, Israel had declared, at Mizpeh, that they would never give their daughters in marriage to the Benjaminites. But now that they saw the outlawed tribe so dreadfully beaten, all their anger was changed into sorrow. They began to fear that the tribe might die out altogether; so, at the yearly feast, which was held at Shiloh, a place north of Bethel on the road to Shechem, they wisely recalled their rash vow; at least, they did not *give* their

daughters to the Benjaminites, but let them *take* them. So, when all the maidens came out to dance at the Festival, each Benjaminite seized the girl of his fancy and bore her off to his home. But, from that time on, Benjamin remained the smallest of the tribes in Israel. It is a stirring story of rough justice and rough mercy, with varying pictures of sternness and tenderness.

And here closes the Book of Judges with those oft-repeated words:

> "In those days there was no king in Israel, every man did what was right in his own eyes."

Should we not always do what is right in our own eyes?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

The Second Commandment strictly forbids the making of any images such as the teraphim, even though intended to represent God.

Dwell on the moral issue involved in the Danites stealing an idol. Compare with it—robbing for charity, supporting hospitals by grinding down employes, observing religious ceremonies and being dishonorable in business, etc., etc.

Do not confuse Mizpeh, in Benjamin, with Mizpah in Gilead, on the other side of the Jordan.

Tell the story of the Sabine women whom the Romans seized in much the same way as the Benjaminites captured their wives at the Feast of Shiloh.

Mishnah Taanith mentions two days in Autumn when the daughters of Jerusalem came forth and danced in the vineyards, so that the young men could meet them and choose them for wives.

HANNAH BRINGS SAMUEL TO ELI.

RUTH AND BOAZ.

SAMUEL ANOINTING SAUL.

Explain equivocation in connection with the manner in which the tribes evaded their vow.

Read "Hospitality," Vol. I., Chap. ix.

Compare the Period of the Judges with Colonial Period in North American History; the separate colonies independent, combining only occasionally to meet acommon enemy; the wilderness has to be changed into fields and cities; the savage Indians have to be driven off. Ethan Allen in Vermont and Marion in South Carolina might be compared with some of the Judges.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RUTH.

BIBLE TEXT: **"When ye reap the harvest of your land thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field neither shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger."** *Leviticus xix. 9, 10.*

There is a little book in the Bible called "Ruth," which in the English translation comes right next to "Judges." The story it tells belongs to that period, for it begins with the words, "In the days when the Judges judged."

The story opens in the land of Moab, at the southeast end of the Salt Sea. Standing on the hills of Judah, one can see the hills of Moab across the water. Here a family had settled from Bethlehem-in-Judah to escape a famine. The father died, leaving a widow, Naomi, and two sons. The two sons, though in the

prime of life, soon followed their father to the grave, each leaving a young wife behind him. They were both women of Moab, named Orpah and RUTH Here, then, were three widows thrown upon the world, who must now seek means of supporting themselves.

Naomi decided to return to her native place, Bethlehem, hearing that the famine there was over. She refused to be a burden on her daughters-in-law and advised them to return to their fathers' homes, where they would be cared for and where they might marry again.

> "And may the Lord deal kindly with you as ye have dealt with the dead and with me." Then she kissed them and they wept and said: "Nay, but we will return with thee." "No, my daughters," said Naomi, "turn again, go your way, it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone forth against me." So Orpah kissed her mother-in-law [good-bye]; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, "Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back, return thou after her." But Ruth said, "Entreat me not to leave thee and return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, where thou livest, I will live, thy people shall be my people and thy God my God; where thou diest, I will die and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part me and thee."

When Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfast in her purpose, she ceased to persuade her. So the two women went to Bethlehem, and when the friends of her native place saw Naomi, widowed and childless, they were deeply touched. She had been young and

beautiful when she left home. Gathering around her, they asked, "Is this Naomi?" The heart-broken woman replied:

> "Call me not Naomi (pleasant); call me Marah (bitter), seeing that the Almighty hath dealt bitterly with me."

The gentle but courageous Ruth saw it was of no use to sit down and bemoan their hard fate. So she decided to go to the fields and gather some food for both by gleaning what was left by the reapers. The gleanings always belonged to the poor. Notice the verse at the beginning of this Chapter. "Go, then, my daughter," said Naomi. Ruth selected the field of Boaz, a well-known farmer of Bethlehem. She could not have chosen more fortunately. Boaz came to his fields in the morning and kindly hailed his reapers with the customary greeting, "The Eternal be with you." And they replied, "The Eternal bless thee." He then asked them who that young woman was, following after the reapers to pick up the stray ears of wheat, dropped from the sheaves of barley. "It is the Moabite damsel who came with Naomi; she has been working here from morning till now." Then Boaz turned to her and gently encouraged her. He told her she need go to no other field during the whole of the harvest, but should stay fast by his maidens. He added further, that she might eat freely at meal time of the food provided for the reapers, and that she should drink of the drawn water when she was thirsty. When she thanked him for

his kindness to a poor stranger, he told her that he had heard all she had done for her mother-in-law since the death of her husband; how she had left her home and family and had come to an unknown place:

> "The Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee, of the Eternal, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou hast taken refuge." "O my lord," she said, "thou hast indeed comforted me, for thou hast spoken kindly to me, though I am not one of thine own."

Which of the three great Festivals celebrates the Barley Harvest?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Contrast Ruth with Orpah—"Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her."

Look through the Pentateuch for all texts teaching duty to the poor—to the poor stranger, the poor Hebrew and the poor relative. See Vol. I., Chaps. xxxvii. and xli.

CHAPTER XIX.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

BIBLE TEXT: **"Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."** *Proverbs xxxi. 29.*

Boaz tried to do all he could to help the Moabite maiden. He quietly told his reapers that they should purposely drop some ears from the sheaves of barley

that Ruth might gather more. As a further consideration for her feelings, he added, "Reproach her not."

Ruth sat down at noon with the reapers, as one of them. They passed her some of the toasted barley dipped in vinegar. When she had finished, she put some of the barley bread in her pocket for her mother-in-law, the faithful girl never forgetting Naomi. Through the special attention that had been shown her, she gathered during the first day an ephah of barley (about 23 lbs). When she brought this home, she told her mother-in-law everything that had happened. Naomi was delighted that Boaz had received her so kindly and told Ruth that he was a relative of her family. Grateful that their prospects now looked brighter, Naomi praised the Lord "who had not left off his kindness to the living or to the dead."

Ruth now went daily to the barley harvest. Boaz admired her more and more for her industry and modesty and her fidelity to Naomi And since it was considered in those days a duty to let no family die out, he asked her to become his wife, adding:

> "For all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman."

This was at the harvest feast, which was always held after the barley was winnowed. Ruth consented, not only from love for the generous Boaz, but also out of regard for the religious demands of the time, whose customs seem so different from ours.

Let me try to make this clear. The right and the duty to marry Ruth and to redeem the family inheritance really belonged to the nearest relative of her dead husband. But there was one man more closely related than Boaz. So his consent was first necessary.

Boaz sat down at the city gate, where everyone passed and where all business was done, to wait till t is kinsman passed by He then gathered ten men of the elders of the city, and in their presence obtained the kinsman's consent to the marriage—buying back the family estate of Naomi's husband, which had been sold out of poverty. The kinsman drew off his shoe and handed it to Boaz This old-fashioned ceremony completed the matter. The elders and all the people that were at the gate blessed Boaz and said:

> "May the Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel, and do thou worthily in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem."

So Ruth became the wife of Boaz. And those who before had wept with Naomi in her sorrow, now came to be glad with her in her joy. When they heard some time after that a son was born to Ruth, they said to Naomi:

> "Blessed be the Lord who hath not left thee to-day without a near kinsman; may his name be famous in Israel. May he be unto thee a restorer of life and a nourisher of thine old age. For thy daughter-in-law who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him."

Was not Naomi too hasty in doubting God's love?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Nearly all transactions were settled at the town gate, without lawyers and without writing; the passers-by became the witnesses. Ephrathah was another name for Bethlehem.

The custom of marrying the childless widow of one's brother, so that his name should not die out, is found in Deut. xxv: 5-10. It is also called the "levirate law," from Latin *levir*—brother-in-law. If a man declined to marry his brother's widow, a special ceremony was gone through, called *Chalitzah,* which means—release. This ancient rite is still preserved in some Jewish communities.

Ruth was a Moabitess, not an Israelite. Yet the Bible devotes one of its books to her. We should judge others, not by their race, but by their character. Despise no creature, black or white; we all are children of God. Ruth came from a strange land, but what a sweet and good woman all found her, worthy, in fact, to be the ancestress of Israel's greatest king—David.

It is nice to get away from the strife and bloodshed of the days of Joshua and the Judges to this peaceful story; it is like sunny quiet after raging storm. This glimpse of pastoral simplicity reveals the gentler side of this period of conflict. The Israelites were not fighting all the time but, it takes longer to tell of one week's war than of forty years' peace. Behind the clouds of warfare there was a quiet, virtuous, healthy life, of which the story of Ruth is such a faithful picture.

Read Moulton's "Literary Study of the Bible," pp. 235-238.

"Ruth," Hood (Readings and Recitations, p. 79.)

Oh, wondrous story of immortal spell!
From a forgotten age, so far and old
That even its traditions now we hold
But doubtfully,—comes down this tale so well
Beloved, which we to-day rehearse and tell
As if Noami's meadows had been sold

But yesterday, and in the kinsman's fold
Still shining lay the golden grains which fell
From sheaves all careless bound, that Ruth might glean.
Oh, wondrous spell of love and loyalty!
No record ever said that Ruth was fair;
And yet all thoughts have pictured her in mien
So beauteous, art itself might well despair
Seeking to paint her tender constancy!

H. H.

JONATHAN TAKING LEAVE OF DAVID.

BOOK II.

ISRAEL, A KINGDOM.

CHAPTER XX.

HANNAH.

BIBLE TEXT: **"May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."**

Psalm xix. 14.

After the death of Samson we again come to a break in the Bible record. The story reopens in a new book, called SAMUEL, for it has much to tell of the life and work of this man. In its first chapter we meet a new Judge, ELI. Whether there were any Judges between Samson's rule and his, we do not know. Even Eli's early life is not given. He is an old man of over ninety when presented to us. We find, further, that, unlike the other Judges, he is the chief priest as well.

In his younger days Eli may have been a brave fighter against the Philistines. But now, in the evening of his life, we find him sitting at the door of the temple of Shiloh. Shiloh in Ephraim, some ten miles from Bethel, had become the capital. It was also the centre for worship, though its temple contain-

ing the Ark was not much more than a tent But the people had formed the custom of coming up every year to Shiloh to offer their sacrifices to God.

There is a cloud on Eli's face as he sits there, that seems to tell of some hidden sorrow of long standing. Yes, his sons Hophni and Phineas have turned out good for-nothing men, and his own weakness is partly to blame for it. Even when he reproved them he did so far too mildly; that is sometimes worse than no reproof at all. Eli was a good-hearted man, but a far too indulgent father.

Who is that coming towards the temple, bringing his yearly sacrifice? It is Elkanah with his wives—Hannah and Peninah. Hannah, whom he loves so dearly, looks sad, and all his tenderness fails to cheer her. She is grieving because she has no children. So, while all the throng of pilgrims are rejoicing in the festival, poor Hannah steps aside and, weeping in the bitterness of her soul, relieves her feelings by offering a silent prayer:

> "O Lord, if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember her and give her a little son, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life." Now Hannah, she spake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.

Eli, seeing her act so strangely, thought she was some ill-behaved, drunken creature and scolded her. Hannah, too sad to be angry, meekly answered,

> "No, my lord, count not thy handmaid a daughter of sin, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither

wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul to the Lord."

"Go in peace," said the priest, touched at her appeal and sorry for his mistake, "and may God grant your petition."

In course of time she was blessed with a little son, and, oh! how gladly her longing heart went out to it She called his name Samuel, for God had heard her prayer (*shoma*, to hear, *el*, God) When the child was old enough to be taken to the yearly festival, she came up joyfully to the temple, proudly showing her boy to Eli.

"As thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying to God. For this child I prayed and God hath granted my petition. Therefore, have I also granted him to God. As long as he liveth is he granted to the Lord." And they worshipped the Lord there.

Here are a few verses of a beautiful prayer dedicated to Hannah:

My heart exulteth in the Lord.
I rejoice in thy salvation.
None is so holy as God: there is none besides Thee.
There is no rock so mighty as our God;
Talk no more so exceedingly proudly,
For the Eternal is God of knowledge
And by Him are actions weighed.
God causeth death and restoreth to life,
Sending down to the grave and bringing up from it.
The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich,
He bringeth low, he also lifteth up,
He lifteth the poor out of the dust,
And raiseth the needy from the mire.

He will guard the footsteps of the godly
And by violence shall no man prevail.

Is it always the parents' fault when boys grow up bad men?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Notice the tendency to put more power in the hands of the chief; Eli is Judge and priest. The title, "High Priest," has not yet come into use.

The Feast of Shiloh has already been spoken of. It was a harvest festival corresponding with the "Feast of Ingathering," see Vol. I., Appendix, "The Three Festivals;" also, in reference to polygamy, Note on page 68.

The easy-going Eli lacked energy in enforcing proper behavior from his sons. But it is well to recall his gentle words: "If a man sin against another, the judge shall judge him, but if a man sin against God, who shall entreat for him?"

Look up in Proverbs any texts dwelling on the duty of correcting children, such as, "He who spares the rod, spoils the child," "Withhold not correction from the child," etc.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CALL OF SAMUEL.

BIBLE TEXT: "**Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength.**" *Psalm viii. 11.*

The pious mother, true to her solemn promise, gave Samuel in charge of Eli the priest. Knowing how long she had prayed for the child, we can imagine what it meant to deny herself the joy of having him

always about her. But those who feel strongly the sense of duty, learn more easily to make the sacrifices that it asks.

Samuel's home was now the temple, and once a year his mother would come to visit him and would bring him a little coat, probably made by her own hands

So, the little boy, with his linen ephod –a sort of girdle for the tunic worn by the priests—became already in childhood a minister of the Lord.

But although those about him were priests, they were not always holy and pure. Some of them, particularly Eli's sons, forgot the sacredness of their office, and were guilty of deeds disgraceful to priests and disgraceful to men. They took more than their share of the offerings, were rude to the people that brought them, and led impure lives Did this evil example corrupt young Samuel? No, for Samuel was a good boy not easily tempted. He had his mother's piety. The best of what we are, we owe largely to our mothers. The wickedness around him only strengthened his resolve to save his people and his people's faith from such evil leaders.

Not all were corrupt by any means. A very severe reproof is uttered against the House of Eli by some upright, indignant prophet whose name is not given, so, possibly, there were others like him. There are always, even at the worst of times, a righteous few who are not afraid to condemn the sins of those in power.

Now we come to a beautiful story of Samuel's boyhood. The almost blind Eli had fallen asleep; the lamp was still burning in front of the Ark, and Samuel had gone to bed, in his little chamber in the temple. When all were at rest and everything was silent and still, he thought he heard some one call him, and he answered at once, like the brave little boy that he was, "Here I am." He jumped up and ran to Eli and asked what he wanted. "I did not call, lie down again." He obeyed, but again he heard "Samuel!" and again Eli told him he was mistaken. But when the call came a third time, Eli thought it might be the call of God, and told him when called again to answer: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." "Samuel, Samuel," said the voice. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," said the little fellow softly. Then the message of God came to him, telling him of the ruin that would follow the sinfulness of the priests, and of the disaster that was in store for the nation.

God speaks to the youth as well as to the man He called Samuel, as well as Abraham. I hope that when God calls you, you will be as ready to answer, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," however hard be the duty you are called to fulfil.

Only a few rare souls hear God's voice, though He is ever speaking. Some of the noble teachers of old earnestly studied God's ways and sometimes they learnt to see what was about to happen. Samuel was

one of the few whom God chose to teach His lessons to His children.

All Israel, from Dan to Beer Sheba, knew that Samuel was a prophet of the Lord.

As Samuel grew to manhood, he brooded a good deal over the open wickedness of Hophni and Phineas and felt that sooner or later it must bring calamity. When lying awake at night, the certainty of some approaching evil filled his heart. For, was not God righteous, and would he permit sin to prevail on the earth?

Why did not Eli hear the voice?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Samuel, like Noah, determined to do right though all about him did wrong. What the majority says, what everybody says, is not always the truth, "Thou shalt not follow even a multitude to do evil."

Give instances of great men called in their youth for high service. Read Jeremiah i.

"Dan to Beer Sheba" is a Bible expression for the length and breadth of the land. In the early days these were Israel's boundaries.

Read "The Child Samuel." "Readings and Recitations," page 80.

Have you seen Sir Joshua Reynolds' picture, "The Child Samuel?"

CHAPTER XXII.

"THE GLORY HATH DEPARTED"

BIBLE TEXT: **Amend your ways and your doings; trust not in false words, saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord."** *Jeremiah vii. 3-4.*

The fall of Eli's House was at hand. The Philistines Israel's old enemies, were at the gate. Israel went out to meet them, returning disheartened, and defeated with a loss of four thousand men. In despair some of them said, "Let us fetch the ark of God from Shiloh and take it with us to battle, it will surely save us from our enemies." Hophni and Phineas carried the ark forth into the field, and at sight of it all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again

When the Philistines learnt that the ark of Israel's God was in the field they were greatly afraid and said, "Woe unto us, woe unto us!" But just because they feared that the wooden ark might turn the tide of battle against them, they encouraged each other all the more: "Be strong and quit yourselves like men, oh ye Philistines, that ye become not servants of the Hebrews as they have been to you." So the Philistines fought desperately—and Israel was beaten. They fled every man to his tent, but many thousands lay dead on the battle-field. The ark of God was taken by the enemy, and Eli's sons were slain.

On came a fugitive from the battle, running to

Shiloh, with his clothes rent and ashes on his head. There sat the blind Eli at the gate, waiting anxiously to hear news of the struggle. Already the city was in a tumult. "What is it, tell me, my son," cried Eli, fearing the worst. In quick gasps the messenger uttered his evil tidings: "I have jus escaped from the field. Israel is defeated by the Philistines—great slaughter—Hophni and Phineas are dead—the ark of God is taken." "What! the ark of God gone!" The shock of this series of disasters was too great for the old man's feeble strength. He fell dead in his chair.

When the tale of woe came to the wife of Phineas, then stretched on a sick-bed, and she learnt at once of the defeat, the loss of the ark of God, and of the death of father-in-law and husband, the news of all these tragedies killed her too, and with her dying breath, she named the child that was just born "Ichabod" (*i*—not, *chabod*—glory.) "The glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken."

What shall we say of those foolish people, who supposed that a wooden box could save them from their enemies! *God is not in the ark.* The ark was only the SYMBOL of religion, for it contained the Commandment tablets; it was not religion itself. It was no more than any other chest in which scrolls or sacred treasures are kept. To think it had special sanctity or special power of its own, was really to treat it as an idol! If the sons of Eli had *obeyed* the law

contained in the ark, it would have been far better for them and for the peop'e. But to carry it to the war and expect it to work marvels—that was both ignorant and wicked; no wonder they were defeated, they deserved to be.

The Philistines, in great triumph, took the ark to one of their cities, Ashdod, on the coast, and set it up in front of Dagon, their idol. But everything seemed to go wrong with them now, and at last they were glad to get rid of it. So they put it on a cart and sent it back to Israel. Many strange things happened to it on the way As Shiloh and its temple had lost their importance after the defeat, the ark was not returned there, but was left in charge of a holy man of Kirjath-Jearim for many years.

Why could not the Ark of Shiloh save Israel if an ark had saved Noah?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Notice the frequent use of "ark" in the Bible, "the ark of the covenant," "the ark of bulrushes," "Noah's ark;" point out the different meaning in each case. When Rabbi Judah, the Prince, died, one of the Sages compared him to the ark of the covenent, breaking the news to the people in these words. "Angels and mortals contended for the ark of the covenant; the angels have conquered; the ark of the covenant is gone."

Read Vol. I., Chap. xxx.

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MAP—Canaan as Divided Among the Twelve Tribes *Front Cover*

JOSHUA CASTING LOTS FOR THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

BOOK I.

CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

CHAPTER I.

GEOGRAPHY OF PALESTINE.

BIBLE TEXT: **"The land which the Lord giveth thee —a land flowing with milk and honey."**
Deuteronomy xxvii.-3.

As this volume begins with Israel's entrance into the land that afterwards became their home, it is time we said something about it. Turn to a map of the ancient world and you will find Palestine at the northwest end of the great peninsula of Arabia. This little land borders on three continents. It is situated in Asia, but it touches Africa near Egypt and is connected with Europe by the Mediterranean Sea. It was almost the centre of the world in olden times, and was used as a pathway both for trade and war.

Palestine is bounded on the north by the mountains of Lebanon, on the west by the Mediterranean Sea (the "Great Sea"), on the east by Hermon, Bashan and the Syrian Desert, and on the south by

Arabia. Its length is 185 miles, its breadth about 70 miles. But from Jezreel to Beer-Sheba, which includes nearly all the leading places in Israel's history, is but ninety miles. The whole land is only about as large as Switzerland. But you know that the importance of countries does not depend upon their size.

The land is naturally divided into two unequal parts by the deep Jordan valley that runs down the middle East of the Jordan is a range of mountains called Bashan and Gilead, sloping southwards to a plateau—*Mishor* in Hebrew. There is another range of mountains on the west of the Jordan, broken right across the middle by the Plain of Jezreel (or Esdraelon); its western end is called Megiddo. The southern half of these mountains slope along the western side into a line of low hills—the *Shephelah*. West of the Shephelah we come down to a broad plain that stretches to the Mediterranean Sea—called the Maritime Plain (maritime means bordering on the sea); in the Bible the upper part of this plain is called Sharon, the lower part "land of the Philistines." The extreme south of Palestine is called the *Negeb*, which means parched country, for it touches the desert.

The mountain ranges shut out the desert; and with the sea they helped to keep the climate moist and the soil fruitful. The mountains were important in another way. Foreign armies could not easily

march up them, while horses and chariots could not penetrate them at all. So it was the mountains of Canaan that belonged to Israel for the longest time, and the plains for the shortest; they never got possession of the Maritime Plain till very late in their history. You will notice that the lower range of mountains west of the Jordan—called Mount Ephraim and Mount Judah—are completely surrounded by plain. You will then understand why they formed the home of our ancestors longer than any other part of Canaan.

Along the line of the Jordan which rises in Mount Hermon you can pick out three bodies of water. The most northerly and the tiniest is called the "Waters of Merom;" a little further down is the Sea of Chinnereth, which is somewhat larger; its waters are sweet and its soil fertile. In the south there is the ample "Salt" Sea, into which the Jordan empties; it is also called the Dead Sea, for hardly any life can exist in its salt waters, and its surroundings are barren and desolate. Its surface is 1290 feet below the level of the Mediterranean.

Broken up as Palestine is into rocky heights, deep ravines and sandy desert, these natural separations made it the home of many nations. The Arameans (or Syrians) were in the north, the Phœnicians were settled along the northwest, the Philistines on the southwest, the Ammonites and the Moabites east of the Dead Sea and the Edomites south of it, while

some seven Canaanite tribes occupied the middle portion that Israel took later on. Still earlier it had all belonged to Egypt. Nor must we suppose that Israel always had the same boundaries; they varied from time to time: sometimes they held almost all Palestine, sometimes very little of it. The immense difference in levels also created in this one little land every variety of climate and fertility. The deserts came very near the cities. There were palms in Jericho and pines in Lebanon. There is perpetual snow on Mount Hermon, while in the southern valleys the intense heat burns up all vegetation.

But what was once a land of pastures and fruitful vineyards is now largely stony, barren and desolate. It is our home no more. But it belonged to Israel long enough to learn life's greatest lessons there—God and Duty—and to teach them to mankind. The story of how the truths of religion slowly came to them has been already begun in the first volume of this book, and will now be continued in the following pages.

Why is Canaan called the Holy Land?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

In the Bible the land of our fathers is usually called Canaan. Later on it was called Palestine, derived from "Philistine" since that nation gave its name to the whole land, though occupying but a small portion of it. The Romans called all the land from the Euphrates to Egypt—Syria.

Beautiful descriptions are found all through the Bible of the land of Israel—its natural features, its scenery, its products. Teachers and scholars should look them up together; (such as Deut. viii. 7, 8, 9; Deut. xi. 10, 11, 12.)

The soil of parts of the Holy Land is being cultivated again to-day and many of our brethren are settling there.

No teacher should be without "Bible Atlas" American Tract Society, 25 cents.

A useful work for Sunday School Library is "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," by G. A. Smith; Armstrong and Son, New York.

CHAPTER II.

JOSHUA.

(ABOUT 1300 B C E)

BIBLE TEXT: **"Be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid nor dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."**

Joshua i. 9.

The last chapter in Moses' life closes a period in Israel's history. Under the leadership of Joshua they are to begin a new era – an era of conquest. It is true that some conquests *east* of the Jordan had been made in the days of the Lawgiver, but this was towards the close of his life. And, too, the land east of the Jordan—Gilead and Bashan—was most suitable for pasture, and encouraged Israel to lead a WANDERING, shepherd life, such as they had lived in the days of Moses. The land *west* of the Jordan was

very fertile suited to a farming people; so here they will begin to cultivate the soil and each tribe will learn to remain in one place. This is going to make them a SETTLED, united nation. This means a step further in their progress, and will prepare the way for the great things that Israel is about to do for the world.

Very often the character of a country helps to form the character of the people that dwell in it; but in what way it will affect them depends largely on the people themselves. The wonderful way in which Canaan was kept fertile by natural rains and heavy dews helped to teach Israel of the great Providence that protects us all. But none of the nations around them had yet learned that beautiful truth taught by the earth's abundant supply for the needs of man.

We first hear of JOSHUA when, as a young man, he led Israel against the cowardly Amalekites, just as we first hear of young Washington in the French and Indian war. We hear of him again as one of the twelve men selected to spy out the land; then, he and Caleb were the only ones who showed themselves faithful, true and brave. Now that their great leader Moses had passed away, most naturally was Joshua chosen to take his place.

When Israel left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, they traversed the great deserts of Arabia—the wilderness of Shur and of Paran; then they skirted

around the land of the Edomites and the Moabites and at last came up into Canaan along its eastern side. At the death of Moses we find them in the plains of Moab. Joshua felt that the wandering and waiting was now over—that the time was ripe for conquest. The people were therefore ordered to be ready in three days for march and action. The two and a half tribes who had been given the lands won east of the Jordan were reminded of their promise to help their brethren.

Two scouts were sent on ahead across the Jordan to learn something of the nature of Jericho (the first town across the water), of its defenses and its people. They forded the river. Arrived on the other side, the two spies slipped past the city gate just as it was closing—at sunset. They soon reached a little inn on the city wall, kept by a woman named Rahab. She would not betray them to the king's messengers sent after them the moment they were seen, but hid them on the roof under some freshly gathered flax left there to dry. The housetops in the east are used like our yards or gardens. They won her sympathy and the promise of her help. She also told them that the whole country had heard of their doings and were in mortal fear of their approach.

In return for her kindness, they promised to save her and her children, should the city be taken. In order to know her house they also told her to bind

in the window the scarlet rope by which she lowered them down outside the city wall. Escaping, by her advice, to the mountains, they evaded the soldiers who were trying to capture them. Soon they returned to Joshua with the good news. This favorable report decided him to start at once.

Was it right of Rahab to betray her people?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Joshua's past won him the leadership: we never know for what great duties God may be educating us.

Joshua's name had been changed from Hoshea. When about to take an important step in life it was customary to change the name, by adding to it one of the letters of the name of God (יהוה —JHVH). So we find Abram's name changed to Abraham and Sarai's to Sarah, by the addition of the Hebrew letter ה.

The Jordan has several fords; but when, at certain seasons of the year, the river is high, the Arabs swim across.

Compare the report of these two spies with those of the twelve. (Vol. I., Chap. xliii.)

CHAPTER III.

THE FALL OF JERICHO.

BIBLE TEXT: "**Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death.**"

Proverbs x. 2.

Jericho was situated in the Jordan valley, six miles from the river and 700 feet below sea level. It was in

a fertile centre, watered by many springs; renowned, too, for its massive walls and heavy gates. A wall round a city was its chief defense till the invention of gunpowder. Jericho had rich temples, filled with gold, iron and brass and costly drapery from Mesopotamia. It was called the "city of palms," and was also well known for its balsam shrub. As it stood just at the highway to the mountain passes that led into the interior of the land, Joshua was anxious to possess it, less for itself than for the opportunities it offered to further conquest.

Led by the priests bearing the Ark, the people crossed the Jordan. *Crossing a river* always seems to have marked an era in our history. Abraham's crossing the Euphrates gave to his family the name of Hebrews ("the people from over the river"). The passage through the Red Sea saw the end of Egyptian slavery and the beginning of the freedom of the desert. The crossing of the Jordan now closed the wandering life of the tribes of Israel and marked the commencement of Israel's life as a nation. Joshua wished the event to be remembered in the future, so he raised on the banks of the Jordan a monument made of stones from the bed of the river.

The march was continued and the people soon reached Gilgal, for it was quite near the river; here they stopped to observe the Passover. When at last they arrived at Jericho, they found the gates closed; for the frightened inhabitants were prepared for a

siege. Joshua's army now went through a strange ceremony. They marched round the city walls for six days, followed by the priests blowing trumpets. On the seventh day at the seventh blast, Israel gave a tremendous shout and the walls of Jericho fell in. They rushed forward and a fierce battle commenced. The enemy fell thick and fast, for they were a people weakened by bad habits, and soon their defeat was complete.

Joshua forbade any man to touch the spoil; whatever was found was to be given up But the greed of a man, named Achan, led him to disobey this command. So he stole a handsome Babylonian garment, 200 shekels of silver ($120) and 50 shekels of gold ($220) and hid them in his tent. But the theft was discovered and Achan confessed his sin. The guilty man and all who aided him were put to death. For Israel felt that they could not succeed if they commenced in sin. They would not touch the stolen goods, they burnt them.

The next place of attack was A-i, twelve miles further on. Proud of their first victory, Israel sent a rather small force against it. They were beaten back by the enemy and felt very disheartened. They cried that God had forsaken them. How ready we are to complain that God has forgotten us when we do things carelessly and fail in consequence

Made cautious by this lesson, Joshua approached Ai again with a much larger army and made a well-

planned attack. Starting forth at night, he hid a small force of men in a valley west of Aï, where they could not be seen. This is called an ambush. When the attack began, Joshua and his men fled as though beaten. On followed all the people of Aï after them Then, Joshua waving his javelin in the air, the sign agreed upon, the men in ambush rose up, set fire to the city and went forward to attack the enemy from behind. Joshua and his men now turned and attacked the people of Aï from the front. Hemmed in on all sides and losing heart when they saw their city in flames, they quickly fell before the advancing Israelites, and the victory was won.

Some time later, when Israel had advanced further into the country, Joshua built an altar of hewn stone at Mount Ebal, and offered burnt offerings to God. You will find Mount Ebal just opposite Gerizim, with the valley of Shechem, called the "Paradise of the Holy Land," between them. Worship of God by the burning of slain animals was to continue for many centuries. Read what is said about this in Chapter xxxv. of Volume I.

Then Joshua wrote upon the stones a copy of the Law of Moses. In the presence of all the people, half on Ebal and half on Gerizim, he read the Law of Moses, telling them of the calamities that would follow sin and of the blessing that would follow righteousness. Men and women, children and strangers,

were gathered there. All answered to each warning and to each command—Amen.

Does death seem too severe a punishment for theft?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

A raised heap of stones to mark an event is an Eastern custom that still prevails. See Vol I., Chapters xvi -xvii.

In later days, the date and the balsam of Jericho made it an important place for trade

Just as easily as Joshua took Jericho was it always taken afterwards.

The difficulty in estimating the exact value of the shekel lies in the fact that it varied in different lands and in different periods. In the days of Joshua the shekel was a weight: it was not a coin till the time of the Exile.

Give a lesson on covetousness, quoting Tenth Commandment.

For the many crimes for which death was the penalty in olden times, and even up to the last century, see "Criminal Jurisprudence of the Ancient Hebrews," Mendelsohn.—Baltimore; Curlander, 1891. This work also presents a comparative treatment of criminals by different nations

Though discouraged by the Prophets, animal sacrifice was not abolished till after the destruction of the Second Temple (70 B. C. E.). Read Deuteronomy xxvii.

CHAPTER IV.

THE GIBEONITE STRATAGEM.

BIBLE TEXT: **"That which is gone out of thy lips shalt thou observe and do."** *Deuteronomy xxiii. 23.*

Alarmed at Israel's rapid conquests, a number of small chieftains in the hill country and in the lowland

thought it prudent to unite their forces. It was no longer safe to meet Israel single-handed. So five kings entered into a league against them. But a neighboring people, named the Gibeonites (or Hivites), so completely lost confidence in themselves, though skilled in arms, and felt so certain of Israel's success, that they were unwilling to enter this league. They did not dare state this openly, fearing the anger of the united kings. So they tried cunning.

A few of them disguised themselves as travelers and came to Joshua's camp at Gilgal. The city of Gibeon, about midway between the Jordan and the Sea, was but eighteen miles from Gilgal, and would have been the next spot reached by Joshua's army. But they pretended to be messengers from a distant land—so distant that their clothing and sandals, new when they started, were now worn and patched. Their bread was dry and mouldy, their skin bottles were rent, and the sacks upon their asses worn out. Certainly, they had all the appearance of travelers from a far country. They told the Israelites they had heard the fame of their God and how He had overthrown their enemies east of the Jordan; therefore they wished to make a covenant of peace with so great a people. The Israelites, deceived by their appearance, believed their story. They had no objection to enter into an agreement of peace with a nation so distant that they might never come in contact with them: so they consented.

They invited the messengers into the camp and broke bread with them. Among the ancients this was a solemn pledge of peace and friendship. The admittance to one's roof and table was more binding than the wax-sealed contracts of our own day. Joshua and the princes swore they should not be harmed, and the messengers left, well pleased with the success of their scheme.

A few days later Israel marched forward to continue their conquest of the land. The very first people they reached were the Gibeonites, for of course they lived close by. Imagine their surprise on being told that they could not fight against them, since they had unawares made a covenant of peace with their messengers!

Joshua and the princes were very angry, but still they would not touch them. They had given their word, they would be true to it. Their honorable and manly conduct may teach us that though others betray us we are not therefore justified in betraying them. Two wrongs can never make one right. You must never plead the sins of others as reason or excuse for your own.

What to do with the Gibeonites, with whom they now could not fight, was a difficult question. If they let them go free entirely, such tricky people might injure Israel in some underhand way. They decided to make servants of them. So for all future time they were to be "hewers of wood and drawers

of water"—the most menial kind of labor at that time. This phrase has passed into our language and has come to mean doers of degrading work.

Are we bound by agreements made under false pretenses?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

The Talmud Jerushalmi says that before Joshua started to conquer the Holy Land he sent these messages in advance. 1st. Whoever would escape death let him leave the country. 2d. Whoever wishes to make an alliance with us may do so. 3d. Let those who wish war, prepare for it. So one people emigrated, one made peace and thirty-one prepared for war.

Mr. Besant has written a story of the toiling classes and called it "The Children of Gibeon." Read "Hospitality," Vol. I, Chap. ix.

For a description of the seven nations that occupied Canaan read Stanley's Jewish Church, vol. i, chap. ix.

Read Proverbs vi. 1-5; also Eccles. v. 4-5.

CHAPTER V.

THE BATTLES OF BETH-HORON AND MEROM.

BIBLE TEXT: **"There is no king saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by great strength."**

Psalm xxxiii. 16.

The five kings who had united against Israel were very frightened when they heard that the powerful Gibeonites had made peace with the enemy. So they decided to "go up and smite Gibeon." The Gibeon-

ites came to Joshua for assistance. He considered it his duty to help them, since he had taken them under his protection.

There was no time to lose, and very soon Israel was at the scene of action. They came upon the enemy so suddenly that they were entirely unprepared for the attack and very soon lost heart. A heavy hail-storm completed their discomfiture. They fled in all directions with Israel hot in pursuit after them—from Gibeon, up the ascent of upper Beth-Horon into Makkedah. Joshua hoped that the day might last long enough to overtake them all. He expressed the hope in the words, "May the sun stand still!" For in those days people believed that the sun moved round the earth instead of the earth moving round the sun. Indeed, we still say that the sun "rises" and "sets." With courage and perseverance Israel *did* succeed in overtaking all their enemies before nightfall. The five kings, or rather chieftains, were all caught in a cave and put to death. The victory was complete.

Beth-Horon, which gave its name to the battle, is about five miles north of Gibeon. It is a rough mountain pass, Upper Beth-Horon being about 700 feet above Lower Beth-Horon. This was so far Israel's most important engagement, for it in a measure decided their success and therefore their destiny. It was the beginning of the conquest of Central Canaan. The battles at Jericho and Ai had only been small skirmishes against individual towns. But

here a united resistance of the enemy was thoroughly broken.

A number of Galilean princes of northern Canaan alarmed at Israel's steady march of conquest also united their forces under Jabin, king of Hazor. With their horses and chariots they together formed a vast army. But nothing seemed to daunt those brave Israelites, whom the hard life of the desert had made strong as iron and fearless as death.

The battle took place near Hazor at the Waters of Merom—where the Jordan widens into a lake. We have hardly any details of the war except that the whole army fell before Israel and that the city of Hazor and the war chariots were reduced to ashes. This was the last great resistance of the enemy in the days of Joshua. It opened up the North for Israel. After some minor conquests they rested from war for a time.

Thus foot by foot Israel had fought its way into the land of its ancestors. Many of the rulers they subdued were only petty chiefs, each governing but a single township and its adjoining district: others again had more extensive sway. Remember, too, that Israel was not always successful. But though sometimes beaten they steadily gained ground. It was fortunate for them that *all* the Canaanites were not united against them at one time. Israel met them one by one, occasionally a union of two or three.

These stories of slaughter are not pleasant reading.

But Israel's success meant a little later on the uprooting of many wicked customs and depraved people, and the gradual spread of a higher and purer idea of life. Sometimes we must be cruel to be kind. History has proved that it was better for mankind at large that Israel should settle in this land and build up a nation from which religion would go forth to the world than that it should be left in the hands of corrupt idolators.

Still it is sad to think that even good can sometimes only be obtained by force and bloodshed. And although nearly all countries have been won by the sword, and even noble causes have triumphed largely by war, still we all hail the time to which the Prophets looked forward when

> "Men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, nation shall not lift up the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Can you remember any great wrong that has been banished by war?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

We must measure our day by the work we do in it. Like Joshua, we sometimes say, "Before the daylight is gone this work must be finished." Then we labor with such energy that we put two ordinary hours' work into one. Of course the world will not stand still for us, nor must we stand still either. But, by untiring energy, we should fill each moment of time with so much usefulness and good that when the sun of our life sets, its battle will be nobly won.

The "Book of Jasher" is here referred to for more particulars of the story of the Battle of Beth-Horon. It is one of many books referred to in the Bible, which are unfortunately lost It was probably a collection of national songs, commemorating the deeds of great heroes, hence the name—"Book of Jasher"—*the upright.*

Hailstorms in some localities are so dreadful as even to crush the limbs of those exposed. In the west here, hailstorms have often destroyed the produce.

At a much later day in our history a great battle was fought and won at Beth-Horon by Judas Maccabeus.

Pick out as many quotations as you can find on "Peace," from the Psalms and the Prophets; notice particularly Isaiah xi. and xxxii. 17-20.

"Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace."

—*Tennyson: In Memoriam.*

CHAPTER VI.

THE DIVISION OF THE LAND.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Unto you I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance."**

Psalm cv.-11.

By no means was all that was afterwards the land of Israel, won in the days of Joshua. That took nigh two hundred and fifty years, almost to the days of King Solomon. There was a good deal of hard fighting after Joshua's death under the leaders that succeeded him. Even much that may have been won in his time relapsed into the hands of the enemy again. For it is one thing to win land and another thing to keep

it. Lacking horses and chariots they could not carry their conquests far into the plains. Nor must it be supposed that they always drove out the inhabitants where they were successful. Many Canaanite settlements remained undisturbed in the heart of Israel.

Joshua did not lead every battle, nor did all Israel stay together as one army. Many tribes made separate expeditions to win fields and homes for their families. Roughly speaking, we may say that Gilgal was the central camp and from that point Israel went forth in two directions. The bulk of the tribes went west and north. Judah and Simeon, aided by the Kenites, penetrated the south. Zephath, a border fortress way down in the Negeb, was one of the first places to be taken by these allies and was named Hormah. Caleb—one of the two faithful spies in the days of Moses—although grown old was a brave warrior still, and at the ripe old age of eighty-five he buckled on his sword and won the important town of Hebron.

Joshua belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, one of the two tribes into which Joseph was divided, Menasseh being the other. But in his stern sense of justice he showed no additional favor to the Ephraimites on that account. They wanted the central hills, so well-watered and so fruitful, so they asked for more land, on the plea that they were so numerous. Joshua curtly told them to win it, *since they were so numerous!* Their tract of land lay about the centre.

Briefly, the location of the tribes was as follows: To

begin with the East of the Jordan. You will first find half-MENAŚSEH, bordering on the sea of Chinnereth; underneath and skirting the Jordan comes GAD; below Gad REUBEN on the shores of the Dead Sea and north of Moab; this whole region is called Bashan and Gilead on the map. Now, cross the Jordan—ASHER is on the Mediterranean coast, just below Phœnicia. It was the seafaring tribe. DAN is also on the coast lower down, next to the Philistines, but it never could retain much of this tract and settled north at the foot of Mount Hermon. NAPHTALI is above ZEBULUN and both are east of Asher. ISSACHAR comes next, skirting the Jordan, with MENASSEH'S second half to its west and EPHRAIM'S ample space below. The little tribe of BENJAMIN follows, being north of the largest tribe, JUDAH, which lies between the Shephelah and the Salt Sea. Most southerly of all was SIMEON, bordering on the Negeb.

These were not always Israel's boundaries; indeed, there were portions never given up by the earlier dwellers. Asher and Naphtali held their tracts in common with the Phœnicians. Issachar, for the sake of peace, was satisfied to be a vassal of the Canaanites. Canaanite towns were dotted here and there all over the land; while Jerusalem was not taken from the Jebusites until the days of David, of whom you will read later on.

No separate portion was given to the LEVITES. They were scattered through all the tribes, and were

given five cities in each division, with cattle pasture. Being the religious teachers of the people, their presence was needed everywhere. The Israelites did not believe in making their priests rich landowners. They had seen enough of corruption that comes from that in Egypt.

Six places were set aside as "Cities of Refuge":

Kedesh in Galilee, in the hill country of Naphtali; *Shechem* in the hill country of Ephraim; *Hebron* in the hill country of Judah. Beyond the Jordan eastward, they assigned *Bezer* in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and *Ramoth* in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and *Golan* in Bashan out of the tribe of Menasseh.

What were cities of refuge? In those rough days when courts of justice and police were yet unknown, a crime had to be punished by the family of the victim. People had to take the law in their own hands, as they sometimes do now and call it *Lynch Law*. But in the time of which we are writing, it was believed to be the *duty* of the family to put to death him who slew one of their own, even *accidentally*. It was this practice that Moses wished to uproot and to teach his people how sinful it was. Therefore, when one man killed another purely by accident — when they, for instance, were in the wood together and an axe slipped—the slayer might flee to the nearest of these cities of refuge. But his life would only be protected if it were proved that he did not intend to take the other's life.

What portion of the land was given to Joseph?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Simeon was hardly an independent tribe, being merged in Judah and dwelling in its towns. These two tribes were separated from the rest by one of the Canaanite clans called Jebusites.

The Altar of the Sanctuary was also a place of refuge. Notice the use of "Sanctuary" in this sense in the Middle Ages.

Read Numbers xxxv.

CHAPTER VII.

LAST DAYS OF JOSHUA.

BIBLE TEXT: **"God is witness between me and thee."** *Genesis xxxi. 50.*

The Reubenites, Gadites and half-tribe of Menasseh had crossed the Jordan, simply to assist the other tribes in gaining a foothold in Canaan. The hard fighting being now over, they were anxious to return to their homes. Joshua dismissed them with his blessing and bade them cleave unto the Lord with all their soul.

When they reached their settlements, they built a huge altar by the Jordan. The rest of the Israelites heard of this with alarm, thinking it a lapse into idolatry. Some of the hot-headed ones talked threateningly of war. Joshua sent some princes with one of the priests to find out what it all meant. They were told that it was not an altar for worship, but a monument to teach their children of the bond

that united them with their brethren across the Jordan.

> "The Lord God He knoweth, and Israel, he shall know if it be in rebellion or in trespass against the Lord that we have built this altar—or if we have not rather out of carefulness and of purpose done this thing."

It was to them, then, a "sermon in stone" to remind them of their relatives, and of their duty to the rest of Israel. Not a new form of religion, but only a symbol of the old one. So they called the altar "Witness" (*Ed*), "for it is a witness to us that the Lord is God." The messengers returned satisfied; and there was no more talk of war.

We must always be careful to judge people's motives as well as their actions; for whether a deed be good or bad often depends upon the *intention*.

Towards the close of his life, Joshua gave Israel some precious words of counsel. First he reviewed their past history from the days when Abraham crossed the Euphrates; he retold the doings of the patriarchs and of Moses, and pointed out in each instance how sin leads to disaster.

> "Be very courageous to observe all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses that ye turn not aside therefrom. Do not worship the idols of the nations around you, but cleave unto the Lord your God. If it seem evil to you to serve the Eternal, choose ye this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods that your fathers served, that are beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE INFLUENCE OF SAMUEL.

BIBLE TEXT: **"His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord; . . . . with righteousness shall he judge the poor . . . . and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."** *Isaiah xi. 3-4.*

The years rolled on and the people learned to look up to Samuel as their head. He became, by natural fitness, Eli's successor. Indeed, he was far more respected and feared than had been most of the Judges before him. It does not take long to measure the worth of a leader. But Israel's complaints under the yoke of the Philistines grew daily louder. They would bear this servitude no longer! They would be a free people! Here was Samuel's opportunity to commence the reformation of his people, which was to be the work of his life. This is the way he spoke to them:

> "If ye return to the Lord with all your heart and put away the strange gods from among you, and direct your hearts unto the Lord and serve him only, then will he deliver you from your enemies."

Many of these simple people had thought that they could not worship God, now that the Ark was gone. They had much yet to learn.

The power for good of Samuel, this man of faith and courage, was growing fast. How he stirred the consciences of the people at the assembly he summoned at Mizpeh! As he closed his prayer, they all fell upon

their faces, crying: "We have sinned against the Lord." Thrilled by his words, they feel they can brave all enemies. Hearing that the Philistines have come up to Mizpeh fearing rebellion, they boldly rush forth upon their old foes and even gain a slight victory. But it was the inspiration of Samuel that did it. We call that *moral* force. It is the greatest power in the world.

But Israel could not expect Samuel to win battles for them. That was not his work. He was not a warrior-judge like Barak or Gideon. If they needed a chief to lead them against their foes—and they certainly did—they must find someone besides Samuel. Samuel's work was *religious*—to teach the ways of God.

In this direction his influence was strongly felt. He would permit no playing with Canaanite customs, or worshiping of Canaanite gods His strong will held the tribes together as they had never been held before. Every year he made a circuit, visiting Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh, places in Benjamin, all near Ramah, Samuel's home. At all these spots, sanctuaries had existed for years. Here he directed the religious life of the people, found out their needs, settled their disputes and taught them their duty in many ways. In how far he influenced the people beyond this circle, we do not know. But many had such trust in his wisdom and advice that they would come from great distances to seek his counsel. He was the first who

fully deserved the title of "Judge," but he was very much more than that. He was the first great teacher since the days of Moses. Much of his work consisted in reviving the Mosaic lessons that the people had neglected or forgotten.

But Samuel's greatest work in the cause of our faith was the founding of the SCHOOL OF PROPHETS. Now, what was a prophet? It has not always meant the same thing. It has often been supposed that a prophet was one who could tell of events that were about to happen, and no doubt some of them laid claim to such powers. For this reason they were sometimes called "seers," *i. e.*, those who can see things unseen by others. But the Hebrew word for prophet more nearly corresponded to our word "inspired," one who was filled with the spirit of God and who felt he was sent to deliver God's message.

"Prophet" did not yet mean all that in Samuel's time, though he was a man of this stamp. In his "prophet school" he trained young men to become teachers of the people. Prophecy cannot really be taught—it is a gift of God, like genius Prophets are born, not made. But Samuel's young men were instructed in "wisdom" (which general term included many things), and to write down the doings of the nation. They were also taught music—to sing the national songs telling the deeds of the heroes; how stirring they were! It was in fact the duty of these young prophets, through these songs, to make patriots

of the people. In olden times patriotism was bound up with religion. Samuel saw the importance of urging the people to lay aside their tribal jealousies and labor together for the welfare of the whole Israelitish nation.

Samuel was also a Nazarite. There was a very close fellowship between Nazarites and prophets. Samuel brought up his young prophets, who all lived together, to be Nazarites—not such as Samson was, who simply permitted his hair to grow while he led an indulgent life; he taught them to be godly men, to renounce all gaieties and worldly pleasures. In this way they became to the people models of purity, simplicity and self-denial. Now, this was in direct opposition to the examples they saw among the Canaanites. For they indulged in luxuries and were fond of riot and dissipation. Whoever imitated these evil customs (and many Israelites did, for these Canaanite ceremonies were very fascinating), were sure to bring upon themselves the severe displeasure of Samuel; and they were afraid of his anger, I can tell you. But in the choice between the morality and the Ten Words and the immorality of Baal-worship, thanks to the efforts of Samuel and men like him, Israel gradually learnt to be true to its better self. Whoever came under the influence of Samuel's disciples, listened to their music and heard their stirring songs, would be so touched by their enthusiasm that they would join in their religious devotions, then and

there. It was, altogether, a time of great spiritual awakening.

Which was the more dangerous to Israel, idolatry or the Philistine?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

There were prophets and prophets. Some, especially in the earlier times, were frenzied enthusiasts, claiming strange powers, stirred into ecstacy by dancing and music. The later prophets such as Amos and Isaiah, were leaders of men, the noblest types of religious teachers the world has seen. But Israel has to pass through much spiritual education before this lofty stage is reached. The subject is more fully treated in Vol. III.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW.

BIBLE TEXT: **"The Lord his God is with him and the shout of a king is among them."** *Numbers xxiii. 22.*

It is rather necessary that you should understand the importance of this period. Israel was undergoing a change—a change for the better. The last chapter tried to explain the change in their religious life—how, being firmly settled in Canaan, they began to think of what might be God's purpose with them. Hence the rise of prophets and the activity of Samuel.

But they were changing in another way, too. The tribes were coming close together and were beginning

to be concerned in each other's welfare. They were no longer satisfied to be scattered clans, going their separate ways and fighting their separate battles. They were awaking to the need of becoming one nation, with all their interests united. Instead of appointing an occasional Judge at a time of danger, they wanted a king. Israel was to become a MONARCHY.

This was not exactly Samuel's wish. He would have liked Israel to be altogether different from other nations, to live only for their religion, *to look to God as their King*. He feared that a monarch, a Court and an army would make Israel proud, worldly and ambitious for conquest. Then they would forget that they were to be the "servants of God," standing apart to preach His name.

But it was impossible for Samuel to get the whole nation to hold such high opinions. There was certainly something to be said on the other side. Why, was it advisable that Israel should have a king? First, because under a more settled form of government justice would be surer. Secondly, it would lead to the formation of a standing army. This would give power to the king and his advisors to maintain peace and order, and to protect the people at large. They would trust their king and would obey him. The law of the land would be more thoroughly carried out and the borders would be more completely defended. It is true that all the able bodied men were supposed to come forward and defend the country

from sudden uprisings when needed—forming what we would call to-day the Militia or Volunteers; but that would answer no longer. Their enemies around —Philistines and Ammonites—were growing steadily in power, and already had kings chariots and cavalry, and if the Israelites were not as well equipped, they would soon be swept away.

When Samuel saw that he could resist the demand of the people no longer, he quietly gave up his cherished idea. He saw that Israel was not ready to understand his lofty view. He was Judge for them, not for himself—and, like a true hero, he was ready to lay down his office if such was their desire, and even to help them to find a king, although the request was a sad disappointment to his high hopes for Israel. However, as a last warning, he gave them a picture of what burdens they might expect from a king. It was a faithful presentation of many an Eastern despot in those days, and even in these:

> "He will take your sons for his chariots and his horsemen. He will set some to plough his ground, some to reap his harvest and to make his instruments of war. He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks and bakers. He will take your fields, vineyards, oliveyards and the tenth of your seed and give them to his officers and to his servants. He will take your best young men and your asses and put them to his work. Indeed, you will become his slaves."

Of course, this was only one side of the picture. A royal house would give unity and strength to Israel.

Samuel, it is true, had done much for the union of the tribes, especially in the south. But as soon as he died they might drift apart again. He was already an old man. They needed a union whose endurance would not depend upon any one man. They needed a central government. Events were about to happen that would hasten the fulfilment of Israel's demands.

Who was right, Samuel or Israel?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Samuel lived at a time of transition. It is hard to be a leader at such a time; one pleases very few. It is an arduous task to stand between two epochs and unite them without jar.

Samuel was an idealist—too noble to be practical, too uncompromisingly severe to be a good statesman. Would we have had him otherwise? God forbid. The world would sink low, indeed, without idealists. They not only elevate the moral standard of their own time, but the seed they sow yields harvests for later generations.

Read Chapter xiv. and xv. Look up texts bidding us not to rely too much on earthly powers, such as, "Put not your trust in princes." Ps. cxlvi. 3.

CHAPTER XXV.

LONG LIVE THE KING!

BIBLE TEXT: **"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil . . . therefore, choose life that thou mayst live."** *Deuteronomy xxx. 15–19.*

Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had laid siege to

Jabesh in Gilead. Although defeated by Jephthah years ago and subdued for the time being, the Ammonites had quietly regained their power and were strong enough to fill Israel with dismay. Nahash even threatened to put out their right eyes. Such barbarities were the commonplaces of ancient warfare. The news of the horror spread through the length and breadth of Israel. There was weeping and lamentation on every side. It was like a picture from the dark days of the Judges again. The news of the calamity, carried through all Israel's borders by the Gileadite messengers, across the Jordan and among the tribes on its western side, at last reached the ears of a man who believed not in lamentation, but in action. His name was SAUL.

Who was Saul? He was the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest but the most warlike of the tribes. More than one had spoken of him as the best man to become Israel's leader. He had an imposing presence, was remarkably tall—like Agamemnon, a hero of Grecian legend—"head and shoulders above his fellows." There was not a finer young man in Israel. He was already commander of a small band of men.

Once he had wandered to Ramah in search of his father's asses; for asses were valuable property. There he had met the great Samuel. The prophet had whispered a mighty message in Saul's ear that made the young man's heart beat fast. What that

message was, we shall know presently. He told it to none, but he was a changed man after that day.

He was ploughing his field with a yoke of oxen, when the messengers from Gilead arrived and told their story. The spirit of God came mightily upon him when he heard their words, and his righteous anger was roused. He cut his oxen in pieces and sent a piece to each tribe, saying, such should be done to the oxen of any man who refused to come to the help of his brethren. The frightened people answered his call like one man. Never such a rousing of the people since the days of Joshua. When the right man appears, how easily he wins obedience and confidence! Saul was soon at the head of a large force gathered from the different tribes. He divided them into three companies. They traveled all night, crossed the Jordan, and came upon the Ammonites in the early morning. The battle was short and fierce. Those of the enemy that escaped were scattered on every side, so that no two of them were left together. The victory was complete and deliverance was brought to Jabesh-Gilead.

Israel had asked for a king who would "go before them and fight their battles." Surely, here was the man they had been waiting for, cried everybody, full of enthusiasm and gratitude? "Yes," said Samuel, pointing to Saul, "behold your king."

The people now gathered at Gilgal, which had taken the place of Shiloh, to anoint Saul King of

Israel. But where was Saul? He had modestly hidden behind the baggage of the camp. "I am from the smallest of the tribes and my family the least of its families," he had already said to Samuel But the people now brought him forth. How he towered above them all! "See him whom the Lord hath chosen," said Samuel. The people shouted, "God save the King!" Amidst great rejoicings Saul was crowned.

Samuel now gave what might be considered his farewell address, for he was now to resign his office of Judge and continue only as the religious head of the people. Here are some of his parting words:

> "I have hearkened to your voice; behold, a king walketh before you. I am old and gray-headed. I have been your leader from my youth to this day. Here I am. Witness against me before the Lord and before your anointed king: whose ox have I taken, whose ass have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a bribe to close my eyes to sin? and I will restore it."

And they answered:

> "Thou hast neither defrauded, nor oppressed, nor taken aught from any man."

Samuel now gave a short sketch of Israel's past history from the time when they first settled in Egypt —taking them through the periods of Moses and the Judges, right down to his own day. In each case he showed—as Joshua had done years before—how righteousness had brought peace, but wickedness had led to misery. He concluded:

"Behold the king whom you have asked for. If ye will fear the Lord and serve him and hearken unto his voice and not rebel against his commands, and if both ye and your king follow God, it will be well with you. But if ye do not hearken to God's voice and rebel against his command, then will his hand be against you. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you. I will continue to instruct you in the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth with all your heart, for consider what great things he hath done for you."

Why did not Israel ask for a Republic instead of a Monarchy?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Gilead and Bashan—though parts of Eastern Canaan, divided among Gad and Menasseh—still retained their distinctive names.

Saul's summons of the tribes by the bleeding pieces was in a measure followed by the Scottish chiefs, who called their clans by a standard of fire and blood. See "Hours with the Bible," vol. iii., p. 108, and "Lady of the Lake" (Canto iii., stanza 8.).

Vespasian, a Roman conqueror, was, like Saul, also raised to the throne by the army he had led to conquest.

Compare Washington's farewell address with Samuel's. See also Numbers xvi. 15.

Aristides, a Greek, who fought in the battle of Marathon, 490 B. C. E., was so renowned for his fairness and integrity as to be called "The Just." Samuel has been styled "the Jewish Aristides."

Compare the modesty of Saul with that of Gideon.

Read "Meekness," Polano's Talmud, p. 237.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SAUL.

(1060 B. C. E.)

BIBLE TEXT: **"Where no wise counsel is, the people falleth, but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."** *Proverbs xix. 14.*

Saul is king; but Samuel does not retire altogether from public duty. The religious head he remains. As chief priest, he stood even above the king, whom he himself anointed. At one time when Saul did not wait for him to conduct the sacrifice, he was not afraid to rebuke the king. But then the prophets never were afraid of kings, as you will learn later.

Not all the tribes were prepared to obey Saul at once. Some, disappointed that a king was not chosen from their tribe, attempted to underrate him. And while a band gathered round him whose hearts were touched at his valor, some base fellows asked: "How shall this man save us?" "They despised him and brought him no present." But Saul held his peace. His bravery soon won the respect of all. When triumph came later and his friends wished to punish those who had slighted him, Saul showed his greatness and forbearance by not permitting them to be harmed.

He entered into all the duties and the difficulties of his office at once. There was no time for indulgence in royal luxury or regal state. The post brought

more danger than honor. King meant—commander-in-chief of the hosts of Israel. There were enemies on every side, who threatened Israel's very existence. He was made king, but he had to fight for his kingdom.

Saul found Israel badly equipped for war They had no arms. The Philistines, who were really their masters, had taken them away and had carried off every smith in Israel.

> There was no blacksmith throughout the whole land of Israel, so they went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share and his coulter, his axe and his mattock.

Some Israelites had even to serve in the Philistine armies, and all had to pay them heavy taxes Even at the harvest festivals it was no unusual thing for the Philistines to invade their fields and carry away the grain.

These Philistines had grown greatly in power of late. Their kingdom, with Gath as its capital, was extending. They attacked and defeated the Phœnicians, on the north-west coast, and had laid waste their chief town, Sidon. Driven from their home, the Phœnicians from Sidon had to seek a new city. They built a town on a rocky island just off the coast and called it TYRE. We shall hear of Tyre again. So, having now obtained all the Mediterranean strip of land between Gaza and Sidon, the Philistines prepared to push further east and take in all the land of Israel; they already had garrisons within Israel's

borders. It began to look as though all Canaan was to be Philistine country, just as in 1759 it looked as though all North America was about to become a French country.

Such was the condition of affairs when Saul came to the throne. The army he had gathered to subdue Nahash, he did not disband. He divided it into three regiments and gave his brave son JONATHAN charge of a thousand men. Something had to be done. There are times when the boldest course is the safest. Jonathan stationed at Gibeah of Benjamin, at Saul's order, attacked the Philistine garrison and overthrew it. It was a daring thing to do. It meant declaration of war against Israel's masters. Was Israel powerful enough to meet them in its present crippled condition? Saul seemed to think so.

He blew the trumpet through all the land – "Let the Hebrews hear." That was the battle cry. From tent to tent it traveled; out came the people. Saul soon had an army about him at Gilgal. The Philistines were not idle either. They, too, took the field, with six thousand horsemen, hundreds of chariots, and with as many foot soldiers, says the story, "as the sand of the sea." The Israelites did not share the bold confidence of Saul. They were in such complete terror of what seemed certain overthrow, that, instead of marching to battle, they ran and hid themselves in caves, behind the rocks and in every cleft and pit, with which that region is full. Some even fled across

the Jordan to their brethren in Gilead. But Saul remained in Gilgal, and those that stood by him, about 600, followed their leader trembling. Only Saul and Jonathan had swords; the rest, whatever rude weapons they could gather. Did it not look like courting defeat? It may have so appeared to the Philistines. But they were not going to have it all their own way.

Who stands in more danger, a brave man or a coward?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Saul sat upon the throne, but Samuel was the power behind it. Perhaps Samuel even gained greatness by his resignation.

Coulter or share is the iron part of a plough that cuts open the furrow.

In 1775, Washington, like Saul, had not only to lead an army, but to create one.

A passing reference tells us that at one time the Sidonians troubled Israel.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FAITH AGAINST NUMBERS.

BIBLE TEXT: **"The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear."**

Psalms xxvii. 1-3.

While Saul was guarding the mountain pass between Michmash and Gibeah, which gave him a certain

advantage, though his numbers were small, the daring Jonathan, followed by his servant, wandered at some little distance to view the situation. None knew that he had gone. Climbing among the rocks, he and his man came upon the camp of the enemy. Then an idea seized Jonathan, who was a true son of his brave father.

> "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these Philistines; for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."

"I am with you," said the courageous armorbearer. Did you ever hear of two men attacking a whole army? This was what Jonathan and his servant were going to do. "Now," said he, "let us show ourselves to them If they say, 'Just wait there till we come to you, and we'll give it to you,' we will wait. But if they say, 'Come here, you bold young Israelites, and we'll show you,' that will prove that they are a little afraid of us and we may go forward, feeling that the Lord hath delivered them into our hand." As things turned out, they *did* call on Jonathan and his servant to come up to them. Was, then, the whole army afraid of two men? Not exactly. But they did not think for a moment that two men would be daring enough to bid defiance to thousands. They supposed that there were many others concealed behind them, who would steal up from holes in the rocks and out of all sorts of unexpected places, and attack them unawares

As Jonathan gained the summit, quick as a flash, twenty men lay stretched upon the field, felled by his mighty hand. The trembling Philistines, taken aback by the suddenness of the attack, were too much amazed even to defend themselves, and began looking fearfully in all directions for the *other* men! In the confusion, they began attacking each other, and were fleeing in all directions, thinking that an army was behind them.

In the mean time, Saul's watchman on the distant hill saw that the Philistine army was melting away, and reported it. What did it mean? Who was attacking the Philistines? wondered Saul; none of us is missing—yes, Jonathan. Had he, then, succeeded with just his armor-bearer in throwing the enemy into confusion? "Up, men, to the relief of Jonathan and to complete this glorious victory." When those enslaved Israelites, whom the Philistines had forced into the ranks, saw their brethren marching forward, they turned against their tyrants and joined Saul. Other Israelites, too, who had been hiding in the hills of Ephraim, came flocking to his ranks, gaining courage through the turn of affairs, and soon Saul's ranks swelled to ten thousand strong.

A sorry day for the Philistines. They fled everywhere. Saul, not wishing them to escape, would not even permit of delay for eating, and issued a solemn command: "Let no man, on penalty of death, eat food till evening." What a severe man Saul was! The

hungry and exhausted army dared not disobey. On they went with the pursuit. In the forest they saw a fresh stream of honey. They dared not touch it; the king had forbidden.

Now Jonathan had not heard his father's command. He saw the honey, took some, and felt refreshed. "Oh! Jonathan," some one said, "you have disobeyed your father's oath." Jonathan was angry on learning that his father should have been so unreasonable, for he saw that the people were faint. When Saul heard that the command had been disobeyed, he instantly called for the punishment of the offender. That the culprit was his own son and that he had disobeyed the law unknowingly, made no difference to this stern king. He thought it would be wicked to let the offender go unpunished just because it was his own son. He had taken an oath, and, like Jephthah of old, he feared calamity would fall upon the people if it were broken. It tore his heart to announce the awful sentence. "Thou must surely die, Jonathan," he said in a choking voice. But the people were not going to permit that, oath or no oath. With one voice they angrily cried:

> "Shall Jonathan die who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid; as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground."

There is a proverb that "the voice of the people is the voice of God." This is not always the case. But certainly when the people take the law in their own

hands there is no resisting them. But I do not think that Saul tried very hard to oppose their wishes, for he loved his son as deeply as he loved justice.

Was Saul right in wishing to fulfil his rash vow?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Give a lesson on faith and its power. Faith inspired the Maccabeans to overthrow the Syrians, though many times their number. Mankind's greatest victories, moral as well as physical, have been won by faith—the faith that can say, "God is with me, I will not fear, what can man do unto me?" (Ps. cxviii.)

Look up Chap. xiv. in reference to what is said about vows.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PUNISHMENT OF THE AMALEKITES.

BIBLE TEXT: **"The wicked shall not go unpunished, but the seed of the righteous shall be delivered."** *Proverbs xi. 21.*

Saul was a man of simple habits, following the plough even after he was crowned. But, while his life was simple in the extreme, it naturally brought a certain amount of state with it, and even of splendor. His success was inspiring fear in the hearts of his enemies. He had now a standing army. Whenever he found a valiant man he made him one of his body-guard; a body-guard was provided for his son also.

These men were not sent home after a war, but were maintained near the king.

Now that the monarchy was secure, Saul made it hot for the disturbers of Israel's peace. Moabites Ammonites and Edomites felt the weight of his hand. "He did valiantly and delivered Israel from the hands of those who would spoil them." It was his energy that drove off the Arabs, who pillaged the fields of peaceful Israelites. The brave captain of his host, ABNER the son of Ner, who was his cousin, and of whom we shall hear more later on, aided him in strengthening the boundaries of the new kingdom.

All went well with the new king—at least until the Amalekite war. This was one of the most important of his campaigns. The Amalekites, living at the south of Canaan, on the borders of the wilderness of Paran, were old enemies of Israel. When the Israelites were coming out of Egypt, weak and inoffensive, seeking only their liberty, the Amalekites had cowardly come up behind them and attacked the women, the children and the disabled. Israel never seems to have forgotten that outrage. It became a sort of national pledge that they would punish it some day. Now they had a king of their own, and the long-sought opportunity was at hand.

But if Saul desired to punish his people's foes, he was determined not to forget their friends. He, therefore, sent word to the Kenites:

"Depart from the Amalekites lest ye be destroyed with

them, for ye showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt."

So the battle began. Samuel bade Saul take no spoil from these Amalekites, but to act as Joshua had acted at Jericho. He even wished none of the inhabitants to be spared, so dreadfully severe was he. Saul completely routed Israel's old foes and raised a monument to mark his victory. But he *did* take the best of the sheep and oxen as prey, against the express command of Samuel, and also spared Agag—the king. When the prophet asked where all this cattle came from, Saul, hesitating a little, said: "The people spared the best of the sheep to sacrifice to the Lord." This made Samuel very angry:

"Hath the Lord as great a delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, stubbornness is as idolatry."

Saul felt very sorry. "I have sinned," he said, humbly, "because I feared the people and obeyed their voice, but pardon me, and return again with me" "I will not return with you," said Samuel. "Do not disgrace me before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord." So Samuel turned again after Saul. Perhaps he was a little too severe upon the king Notice, particularly, that he does not lay much importance on sacrifice. *Conduct* is higher than sacrifice—that is the substance of his rebuke.

From that day on, Saul became low-spirited. He was silent and sullen and began to lose his better nature. When these fits of sadness came upon him, a young harper was called to play before him and drive away his gloomy thoughts. His servants found "a son of Jesse, a Bethlehemite, cunning in playing, skillful in speech—a comely person, and the Lord was him." His name was DAVID. Already the eye of Samuel had sought him out, seeing in him a future leader in Israel.

When does punishment become revenge?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Punishment in the interest of justice, for the improvement of the individual or for the protection of society, is justifiable. Punishment to "get even" with one who wronged us, to satisfy our spite or revenge, is sinful. The Amalekites were punished as an example to the world—teaching that strong arms were given us, not to crush the weak, but to defend them.

"Obedience gives right to command."—Emerson. The epitaph of the three hundred at Thermopylæ was "Tell it in Lacedemonia that we died in obedience to her laws."

Samuel's contempt for Saul's sacrifices was in the true spirit of the prophets. See Micah vi.

Read Vol. I, Chap. xxxi.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A NEW HERO.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall."** *Proverbs xvi. 18.*

The conquests of the Philistines had been somewhat checked and their pride humbled, but they were by no means subdued. Indeed, "there was war against the Philistines all the days of Saul." They had crossed the borders of Judah, and there they were on the ridge of a mountain at Socoh, with Israel's army on the opposite slope, and nothing but a valley between them.

Now, there was a famous warrior in the Philistine camp, of giant stature, in some places called GOLIATH, but most often described as "the Philistine." He was terrible to look at in his brazen helmet and scarlet coat of mail. His legs were also encased in metal, "and the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam." "Come," said he, stalking forth in the valley, "let us decide this battle by single combat." "I'm a Philistine, choose you an Israelite. If I am killed, then the Philistines shall be Israel's slaves. If he is killed, then you serve us." That sort of combat was not uncommon. But there was no man in Israel a match for this burly bully. When he saw that none responded—for, to tell the truth, they felt dreadfully frightened—he began to abuse them "Ha! I defy the armies of Israel this day."

But a champion was at hand—David, who was a soldier as well as a minstrel. He had been told by his father to leave his sheep and go to the camp and inquire after the welfare of his three elder brothers, who were in the army, and to find out what they needed. He brought them an ephah (about a half bushel) of parched corn and ten loaves of bread; and ten cheeses as a present to their captain. Just as he was greeting his brothers, he heard the bragging Goliath calling for a champion, for he repeated his request every day.

David was amazed. "What does it mean?" he asked. "Haven't you heard," said someone, "whoever slays this giant, who is defying the army of Israel, the king will enrich him, aye, and give him his daughter in marriage." David angrily burst forth, "How dare this Philistine defy the armies of the living God!" When Eliab, his eldest brother, saw him moving among the soldiers and inquiring about "The Philistine," he became just a little vexed that the youngster should speak so fearlessly, while everyone else was trembling. So, as older brothers are often fond of doing, he began snubbing young David: "Why haven't you gone back to your sheep, you idle fellow? I know how reckless you are; you have come to see the battle, that's what you're here for." "What have I done now," said David meekly enough, "is it not then sufficient cause to feel disturbed?"

He turned away and asked another and another, "Why had no one answered the challenge?" until the men were so struck by his boldness, that they began talking about him. Thus the rumor reached Saul that there was a young man in the camp who did not seem afraid to challenge the Philistine monster. Saul sent for him. By the time David found himself before the king, he had entirely made up his mind. "My lord king, let none fear, I will go forth and fight this Philistine," "Nonsense," said Saul, kindly; "you are only a lad, while he has been a warrior all his life." "I am not so untried as you suppose. I keep my father's sheep. Once a lion stole one of my lambs; I gave chase, seized the lamb and killed the lion. The same thing happened with a bear; and I'll so treat this fellow, since he has dared to defy the armies of the living God. The Lord, who delivered me from the jaws of the lion and the paws of the bear, will surely deliver me from this Philistine."

"Go, then!" said Saul, realizing that he had certainly seen service, and had that courage which is always the best half of the battle; "let me put my armor on you, my brass helmet and my coat of mail, and here, take my sword." But David could not walk at all with all that heavy armor. "I can not go with these; I have never tried them." He put them off with a sigh of relief, took his shepherd's staff, and, picking up five smooth stones from the brook, he put them in his bag. They were all the

weapons he wanted, and, to the wonder and admiration of the whole army, he went forward and faced Goliath.

The giant looked at David; and his armor-bearer who carried his huge shield, stared too. "What," said he, scornfully looking at the fair boy with ruddy cheeks, "am I a dog, that you come to fight me with a stick?" And he began cursing David and jeering at him: "Come here, I'll soon make mincemeat of you for the beasts of the field." But David was not a bit frightened at all this bragging. Notice how different is his tone:

> "Thou comest to me with a sword and a spear and a javelin, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into my hand, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel; and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear."

But he was going to spend no more time in words. As the huge bully approached with uplifted sword to crush him, David quickly ran toward him, put a stone in his sling, hurled it with unerring aim right at his forehead, and he fell to the earth - dead!

When the Philistines saw their champion slain they took to flight. Up rose the Israelites shouting, and pursued them back to their own land—to the very gates of Gath and Ekron. What a day of triumph for Israel!

Why was David wise to refuse Saul's armor?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Ask the scholars if they have ever seen a giant or a dwarf; some of them may have seen a suit of armor in a museum, let them describe it.

Name some of the giants we all have to conquer—avarice, lying, spite.

If the Philistines had not taken away all arms from Israel and compelled them to use the weapons of nature, they would not have become so dangerously expert with the sling. Show how this has often been Israel's fate in later days and in other ways.

"It was a custom of antiquity for champions to come forward from the ranks of either army, usually with words of derisive defiance, and challenge one of the opposite forces; reminding us of De-Bohun at Bannockburn and Taille-fer at Senlac; also in the Iliad—Paris and Menelaos, Ajax and Hector; in Livy—the Horatii and the Curiatii."—Geikie: "Hours with the Bible."

CHAPTER XXX.

FRIENDSHIP AND JEALOUSY

BIBLE TEXTS: **"Jealousy is cruel as the grave, the flashes thereof are flashes of fire."**
Song of Songs viii. 6.

"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." *Proverbs xviii. 24.*

After that "famous victory" David was the hero of the hour. "Who is he?" everybody was asking.

But on none had his bravery made so deep an impression as on Jonathan. Was Jonathan jealous—

did he fear that David's brave act overshadowed his own exploit near Gibeah, that people would forget Jonathan in rejoicing in the new hero? No! Jonathan was not that kind of man. He had no room in his generous heart for anything but admiration for the brave lad. *Jonathan did not know the meaning of envy.*

He loved David just because of his bravery.

> "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul."

In his warm admiration, he took off his princely robe, his girdle, even his sword and bow, and gave them all to David. These were honors as well as gifts. They became friends from that hour — till death.

Saul also showered honors upon him and made him give up the life of a shepherd and live in his palace. Saul would send him on raids against border foes and he always came back victorious. He was soon made one of the chief captains, and everybody was delighted. What a pity that things could not continue in this happy way!

It has already been said that David was a skillful player on the harp. In this way he had first been brought to the notice of Saul. Whenever the king felt gloomy, David would be sent for, and as his hands wandered over the strings, and the soft melody touched Saul's soul, all his cares seemed to flee away: a sweet content stole over him. What is so comfort-

ing as music! There is a very pretty fable that you may some day read of Orpheus who played the lyre so wondrously that nothing could withstand its charm. Even the wild beasts were touched by it, would forget their fierceness and gather round to listen The ancients had a way of telling a truth in the form of a fable.

But as David gained more and more fame as a warrior, Saul became less satisfied. He began to be jealous. How different his character from that of his son Jonathan! It annoyed him to hear the people for ever sounding the praises of David. One day when David and Saul returned from a particularly successful battle, the women came out of the cities to meet them, singing and dancing for joy and playing their timbrels and triangles. But when the king heard the words of the song:

"Saul hath slain his thousands
And David his ten thousands,"

he grew furious. "What," he cried, "they ascribe ten thousands to David and only thousands to me? Next they will be asking to have him made king." All his affection for David was gone. Oh, if he could only get him out of the way! When David was innocently playing before Saul next day, a dark thought entered the monarch's angry soul, that even the music could not chase away. He hurled his spear at David, and the young man narrowly escaped the blow From that hour forward he knew that Saul was his enemy.

But he continued to be the favorite of the people, more than ever.

This foolish jealousy of Saul really spoilt the rest of his life and marred his otherwise noble character It blinded him to justice, it made him cruel and revengeful. You will hardly recognize the chivalrous Saul, whose sympathy with his oppressed brethren won him the crown, in the moody, spiteful man he became in his later years.

What is the best test of friendship?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

For a prince to present robes from his own person was considered a special honor.

Recall stories of famous friendships, that of Damon and Pythias, of Orestes and Pylades, Hallam and Tennyson; read Schiller's "Burgschaft." Look up some Bible quotations on friendship.

Give a lesson on the influence of music. Tell why it plays so large a part in divine service; Amphion is said to have built Thebes to the sound of his lyre, the stones moving to their places with the melody. David had an Æolian harp, so runs the story, which hung above his bed; the night breeze would play a melody on its strings, and he would rise and sing a hymn of praise to God.

Read "Song of the Night," Readings and Recitations, p. 95.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BETWEEN FATHER AND FRIEND.

BIBLE TEXT:—**"A friend loveth at all times, but in adversity he is born as a brother."** *Proverbs xvii. 17.*

Saul promised David that he would let him marry his eldest daughter Merab, if he only showed himself valiant against the Philistines again. I am afraid this was but an unworthy pretext of Saul to endanger David's life. For he should have already given him his daughter for slaying Goliath. But David did not seek this honor. "Who am I," said he, modestly, "who are my kinsfolk, what is my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to a king?" Still he went forth to battle again and came back victorious, only to find Merab married to another man, named Adriel.

But Saul had a daughter Michal, who really loved this daring champion of Israel. Saul now promised Michal to David, but only on condition that he endangered his life in again attacking the national enemy. They were times when "faint heart never won fair lady." But "fortune always favors the brave" David came forth unharmed and claimed his bride He now became Saul's son-in law, but still the king would not give up his resolve to sweep David from his path.

Jonathan was thus placed in a very trying position.

David he loved "as his own soul;" yet his father sent word to slay him. He must protect his friend, so he bade him hide in some secret place; still he did not wish to displease his father. Why not plead his friend's cause? He went to his father and said:

> "Do not sin against thy servant, against David, because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been good towards thee. He put his life in his hand to smite the Philistine and wrought great deliverance for Israel. Thou sawest and didst rejoice, why then sin against innocent blood to slay David without a cause?"

O generous Jonathan, you have changed your father's heart. Touched by his son's rebuke, Saul swears, "As the Lord liveth he shall not be put to death." The delighted Jonathan brought David back to his father and they were reconciled again.

But that green-eyed monster, jealousy, is a hard foe to slay. When we think he is dead, he is only lying quiet, and will spring up again when we least expect. Another victory of David, and Saul's envious hatred returns as fierce as ever. Yes, he will slay David after all. His servants are commanded to watch the house, to kill him when he steps forth. But the fidelity and devotion of Michal now came to his rescue. She would save him at any cost. She let him down from the window at night, and put in his bed a dressed-up image that looked like David. When the king's servants came to take David she said he was sick. In this way she gained time. Again they come to take

him, sick or well; they discover the deceit; but by that time David is well away. Michal bore her father's anger to save the husband she loved

David fled to Samuel, told him his troubles, and together they went to Naioth, in Ramah, the school of the prophets. Saul sent three sets of messengers to slay him even there; but each company was overcome with awe at these religious and peaceful surroundings, and those who came to slay remained to worship. Angry at what he thought their disobedience, the king came himself. But Saul was a man of strong religious feeling, too, and showed it in his earlier and brighter days. It was only his jealousy and anger that now frequently got control of his better self. He, too, forgot his evil passions in this sweet, religious peace. In this holy retreat, his soul was filled with awe. The spirit of God stole over him. Once just before his reign began, he had entered among Samuel's company of prophets and the holy companionship had inspired him and given him "a new heart." Perhaps he recalled now that earlier day when he was not a king, but a better and a happier man. Here in the same place he now spends the night in prayer with his old teacher and counselor, Samuel; so that people asked, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Saul returned to Gibeah, humbled and purified.

David and Jonathan meet again. "What is my

iniquity," said David, "that I should be persecuted unto death in this way?" "Fear nothing," said his friend, "I will protect you." "But to-morrow is the New Moon Festival; when all assemble at the king's table, I shall be missed." "Never mind," said Jonathan, "I will excuse you, and let you know if my father still seeks your life. God witness that I shall be true to you, and advise you as to your welfare." No need to assure him of his friendship, David knew he was loyal and true. "Let us again promise to befriend each other and each other's families." The bond of friendship was renewed. "Hide here, and in a few days I will return and will tell you whether you must stay or flee."

Jonathan returned, bringing bad news. Saul was as bitter as ever. For when Jonathan had ventured again to put in a mild plea for David, this time he was not so successful. Saul in blindness of passion had cast a javelin at him. How much he suffered and underwent for the sake of his friend! The friends embraced and wept "Go in peace," sobbed Jonathan. "We have both sworn that God be between us and between our children for ever. Good-bye, David." "Good-bye, Jonathan." And thus they parted.

There is no nobler instance of unselfish friendship, in the world's history than that shown for David by the son of his enemy. When we want an example of a true friend we always think of Jonathan.

Ought we to forgive Michal's deception?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Seek comparisons in the different Bible stories where you can; here is one, Jacob works for Rachel, her father deceives him out of his reward, so he works for her again and wins her. David fights for a king's daughter, is also deceived, fights again, and wins a king's daughter at last.

Pick out from the "Wisdom Books" of the Bible (as Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes are called) all admonitions against anger, such as Prov. xvi. 32; Eccl. vii. 9, etc.

Naioth may have been a log cabin in which the company of prophets lived.

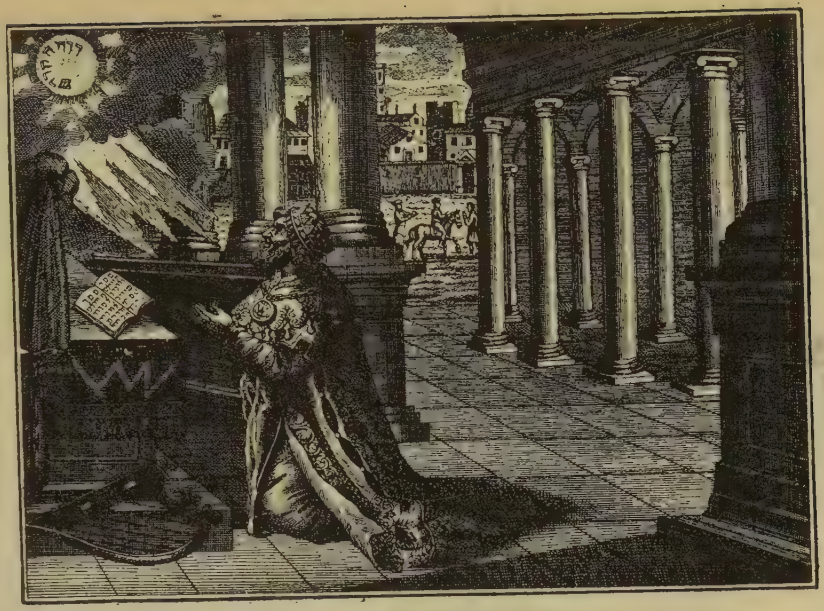
The "New Moon" is not to-day the festival it once was. But still mournful prayers are omitted from the Ritual, and Psalms of Praise (Hallel) are added. See Vol. I., page 179.

CHAPTER XXXII.

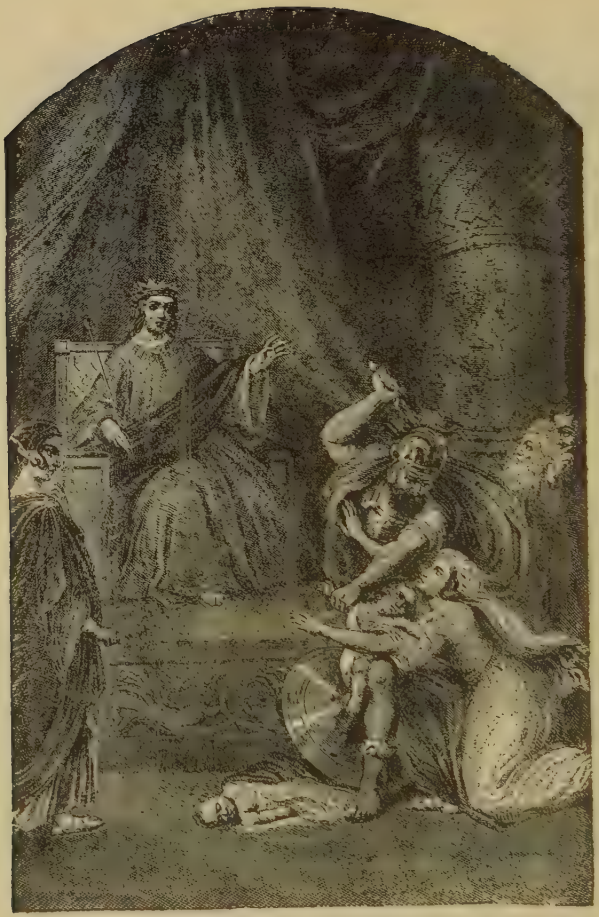
THE FUGITIVE.

BIBLE TEXT:—**"Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people."** *Leviticus xix. 3.*

David had no time to lose. The unhappy fugitive must continue his flight. He went in the direction of his own home, Bethlehem, and came to a place called Nob. There was a small temple here, presided over by a priest named Ahimelech. The priest was alarmed at his unexpected appearance, without guards, his garments soiled and torn. But David induced him to give him some bread, and also to entrust him with the sword of the Philistine giant, that had been kept there



DAVID PRAYING.



THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON.

since David had slain him. Now there was a man standing by, named Doeg, who had quietly watched these proceedings; and thought, perhaps, he might make something out of them by telling Saul.

David hastened on, and gradually a good many disappointed and discontented people who were admirers of David began to join him; perhaps, also, some members of his family—

> "Everyone that was in distress; everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was bitter of soul,"

flocked to the standard of this ancient Robin Hood, so that he soon had a band of nearly four hundred trusty followers. Their stronghold was a rocky cave, called Adullam, not far from Bethlehem. David feared that Saul, in one of his impulsive bursts of passion, might revenge himself on his parents. He must save them at all hazards. The brave warrior was also a dutiful son. Courage and obedience go hand in hand. You may often judge one's character by the way he treats his parents. So, while he would not leave them behind him, he also did not intend to expose his aged father and mother to all the perils of his own mountain-life, where, pursued by the enmity of Saul, he every day took his life in his hands. So, risking the danger, he secretly crossed the river Jordan, almost under the very eyes of Saul, and entrusted his parents to the care of the king of a friendly province—Moab. Moab, you will remember, was the birthplace of Ruth, from whom David was descended.

But David's retreat was not long secure. A trusty friend came to inform him that there was danger ahead, so that the fugitive and his followers had to move on. All this was not good news to Saul, he began to suspect that those about him were secret friends of David. So, while sitting under the tamarisk tree at Gibeah, with his servants around him, he turned upon them in a manner that was half rebuke and half appeal: "Why do you conspire with the son of Jesse; suppose he were made king in my place, would he give you better fields or more honors? There is not one of you that I can trust; none of you told me that David and Jonathan had made a league of friendship, none of you feel sorry for me and none of you will help me." There was a dead silence; they *did* feel sorry for him, yet how could they sympathize with him in his cruel and needless persecution of the people's favorite?

But one man stepped forward—it was Doeg the Edomite, the treacherous tale-bearer, who now saw an opportunity of winning royal favor. He said that he had seen David come to the priest Ahimelech at Nob and receive food and a sword. The enraged king sent for Ahimelech and all his priests, and accused them of treason, for conspiring against the king's enemy. Nobly they defended the absent David:

> "Who among all thy servants is so faithful as David, whom thou hast taken into thy council and who is so honorable in thy house?"

They pleaded, too, their own innocence, but it was of no use. Turning to his guard, he issued the command, "Slay these priests." But they would not kill these holy men—no, not even at the risk of the king's displeasure. Then he turned to the rascal Doeg, "You slay them." He had betrayed them, why should he hesitate to kill them? To what fearful crimes was the king's jealousy bringing him!

But one escaped the slaughter—Ahimelech's son Abiathar—and he brought to David the tragic news. "Ah," said David, "when I saw that scamp Doeg there, I knew he would tell Saul. Unhappy man that I am, I am the cause of the death of all your father's house; henceforth stay with me, fear nothing, for he who seeks my life, seeks yours also."

Should the priests have denied help to David as an enemy of the king?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Gibeah in Benjamin, Saul's birthplace, was made his royal residence.

Read "Honor to Parents," "Polano's Talmud," page 241.

Read Psalm lxiii., ascribed to David while in the wilderness.

To Doeg may we well apply the text, "Envy thou not the oppressor and choose none of his ways."

In Sanhedrin x. 2, the Mishna voices the contempt felt for Doeg, by naming him among seven persons who are denied bliss in the future world.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FORBEARANCE.

BIBLE TEXT:—**"Say not, as he hath done to me, so will I do to him."** *Proverbs xxiv. 29.*

Word reached David in his mountain retreat that the Philistines had attacked the people of Keilah—a city of Judah, just south of Adullam – and stolen their wheat and cattle. Could he, in his desperate condition, help his people now? His men wished to dissuade him from so daring an attempt, "We are in peril even in Judah, how much more in the land of the Philistines?" David hesitated. Should he risk his life to save his distressed brethren or should he look out for himself? The worthier motive conquered. He put his trust in God. Down he came upon these Philistine robbers, put them to flight, and brought back the stolen plunder to the distressed people of Keilah.

But he soon learns that it is dangerous to linger here longer, so he and his men wander towards the wilderness of Ziph. Here Jonathan steals out to encourage his beloved friend and "to strengthen his hand in God."

> "Fear not, my father shall not find thee. Thou shalt be king over Israel and I shall be next to thee."

Alas for Jonathan, that hope was never to be fulfilled. This, indeed, was their last meeting, but neither knew it Meanwhile Saul would give him

no rest, hunting him down from rocky cave to mountain fastness; and he had many narrow escapes. At one time it looked as though David would be delivered into his enemy's hands at last. It is a beautiful story that is twice told:

Saul learned that David was hidden behind the hill of Achilah. From here Saul pursued him to Maon, south of Hebron. This district is called "The Arabah" (desert) and includes all the valley of the Dead Sea With a large force of men the place was besieged. Night came on, the besiegers lay down to sleep; for Saul would not give up the pursuit, so bitter was his enmity. Out stole David and his friend Abishai. There was no one on guard. There lay Saul with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner, his captain, lay beside him, with a barricade formed by the wagons around them. "There's your enemy at last," said Abishai, "shall I smite him with his own spear? I can kill him at one stroke." David, horrified at the thought, held him back:

> "Destroy him not; who dare put forth his hand against the *Lord's Anointed* and be guiltless? His day will come to die. God forbid that I should put forth my hand against the king. But take the spear at his head and the cruse of water and let us go."

So they slipped away and no one stirred. David ran a great distance up the mountains, and then shouted at the top of his voice "Abner!" Abner stirred; "Who is that calling?" "You are a nice and

valiant guard for the king, I must say," said David. "Why didn't you keep better watch, some one might have come in and slain the king; you deserve to die for your negligence; look, and you will see that the king's sword and cruse of water are gone." Then Saul recognized the voice: "Is this thy voice, my son David?" "It is, my lord," said David, reverently bowing.

> "Why doth my lord pursue his servant? For what have I done? What evil is in my hand? Saith an ancient proverb, 'Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness,' but my hand shall not be upon thee. This day thine eyes have seen how the Lord delivered thee into mine hand. Some bade me kill thee, but mine eyes spared thee. The Lord judge between me and thee."

The conscience stricken Saul, always impulsive in good as in evil, burst into tears:

> "I have sinned. Thou art more righteous than I. If one find his enemy will he let him go well away? But thou hast rendered me good for evil. May the Lord reward thee good for what thou hast done me this day. Return, my son David. I will no more do thee harm, because my life was precious in thy sight this day I have been foolish, I have erred exceedingly."

"Here is your spear," said David, very much touched by the king's humility; "send one of the young men to fetch it; may God render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness. As I delivered you to-day, so may I be delivered." "Blessed be thou,

my son," said Saul, "you will yet do mighty things and you will prevail." And so they parted.

Would David have been justified in slaying Saul?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

The King was called the "anointed" (Hebrew M'-shi-ach) because the ceremony of consecration consisted in pouring oil on his head.

The second version of this story places the scene in the cave of Adullam; here David, instead of taking the sword and cruse, cuts off a hem from the king's skirt. In connection with this story, read "Nothing Without Use," Polano's Talmud, p. 310; also "Legends of Patriarchs and Prophets," p. 384.

Read Psalm cxlii.

Saul's most striking trait is his impulsiveness; that urged him on to deeds both good and evil. Trace this quality in *every* incident told of his life.

Jonathan loved his friend, but he stayed by his father, although disapproving his persecution of David. Here was a divided duty, and all will agree that Jonathan chose rightly. Take this opportunity for a lesson on "conflicting duties."

We love Jonathan because he was as gentle as he was brave; he had many of the tender qualities of a woman and all the sterling qualities of a man.

AMORITES, FROM PYLON OF RAMESSEUM.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PEACEMAKER.

BIBLE TEXT:—"**Wisdom is better than weapons of war; but one sinner destroyeth much good.**"

Ecclesiastes ix. 18.

About this time the aged Samuel died. He had long retired from active service, still the loss was greatly felt and all Israel mourned his death. Perhaps his work was not then valued at its true worth. Only in after years did people understand what a great man he was and how much he had done for the nation and the faith.

David's band had now increased to some six hundred. They lived mostly in the desert of Judah, among the barren wastes and highland fastnesses. At one time they wandered down to the wilderness of Paran, the home of Ishmael, you remember. It was a wild, strange life. They would protect the flocks of their neighbors and save them from robber bands, and in exchange would be given cattle, wine and corn. They would also conduct travelers through dangerous passes for suitable reward. Some of the Bedouins do much the same thing to-day. Still, it was an existence full of danger. Sometimes, in spite of the protection they rendered, the people benefited were neither kind nor grateful. Nabal was one of these.

He was a rich man whose pasture lands on Mount Carmel were full of cattle. Carmel is easily seen, as it

is the only promontory along the regular coast line. Here Nabal had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. But he did not bear a good name. He was churlish, selfish and a drunkard. I think boys would call him "mean."

Sheep-shearing time came round. This was always an occasion for feasting and good cheer : quite a festival in fact. Since David had protected the flocks of Nabal, he took the opportunity to send ten young men to greet him, wish him peace and, at the same time, to remind him of the services they had rendered, and to ask a present on the joyous occasion.

But the disagreeable Nabal said : "Who is David? I am not going to give my bread and water and meat to people I know nothing about." They brought back this ungracious message; and you can well imagine how angry it made David and his men. If they could not obtain food peaceably, they would fight for it. Each man girded on his sword, and only two hundred were left behind with the baggage.

The approach of David reached the ears of Nabal's wife, Abigail; she was beautiful, clever and kind. She was determined to prevent this quarrel if possible. She had been told by her own household what a good friend David had been to them all. The messenger who brought her the news said : "David and his men were always very kind to us. While they were near, we never missed any of our sheep They were a wall of protection both by day and night. And our master

Nabal is such a base fellow, there is no reasoning with him at all."

Abigail's mind was soon made up. A generous present of loaves, wine, dressed meat, parched corn, raisins and figs was hastily prepared and laden upon asses. She rode down, accompanying the present, and met David and his men on the way. "Blame me not for your bad treatment," she said; "pray listen to me. Please do not pay any heed to Nabal's message, for Nabal is his name and folly is his nature (Heb., *Nabal*= fool). And now, my lord, let me keep you from bloodshed. Behold this present, let it be given to your followers Forgive my trespass, and may God make your house sure and fight your battles, and may no evil come upon you. May your soul be bound up in the bundle of life. When better days come may you have no cause to grieve that you had shed innocent blood; and do not forget your faithful handmaid, Abigail."

Who could resist such a beautiful speech and such a generous present? Certainly, not David. His anger died at once: "Bless you for saving me from the guilt of bloodshed and blessed be God that sent you."

As for Nabal, he was drinking himself to death and did die soon after. Some time later David sent messengers to Abigail, asking her hand in marriage. You will not be surprised to learn that she consented. In the olden days of the patriarchs,

Rebecca had also won a husband by courtesy to a stranger.

Had David a right to demand food from Nabal?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

In pastoral and agricultural life, sheep-shearing and harvests are the great events of the year.

"May thy soul be bound up in the bundle of life." This is an Eastern figure of speech. It is still used to express the hope of immortal life. The initials of the Hebrew words are often inscribed on tombstones; they are: ת' נ' צ' ב' ה'.

Read Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

CHAPTER XXXV.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Ye shall not steal: neither shall ye deal falsely, nor lie one to another."** *Leviticus xix. 11.*

This wild and perilous life led by David and his men could not continue much longer. The strain was too great. The bitter enmity of Saul, that had died out only for a time, had made David an outlaw. He was under the ban: a price was put upon his head. If he wished to live in security, he must leave the land of the people he loved and seek refuge in some foreign nation, as Jephthah was forced to do in the days of the

judges. You will understand what terrible despair at last compelled him to seek protection among his old enemies—the *Philistines*.

But would they receive him? Yes, indeed! Achish of Gath was well pleased to have so dangerous a foe, with six hundred stalwarts, under his eye. David had to promise some service for this protection. The Philistine king supposed that he had quarreled with his people, and would now gladly take up arms against them. He, therefore, gave them the city of Ziklag, in the Negeb, to live in, on condition that they would become his vassals, and make war against the Israelites, giving him part of the booty.

But David loved his people far too well to be induced, even in this most desperate strait, to take up arms against them. In fact, he was neither candid nor truthful to Achish, in the way in which he evaded and broke this promise. He would sally forth with his men, apparently to attack his own people, but really to make a raid on their enemies—on the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. Of course this made Achish believe that he now hated the Israelites and had broken with them forever.

We cannot for a moment defend this deception on the part of David. He was very hard pressed, it is true. But our truthfulness is only tested under difficulties. Who will not be truthful when no sacrifice is called for? "Let justice reign, though the heavens fall," is a fine Persian proverb. Be truthful not only

when it is easy, but when it is hard, and brings pain and loss.

The Philistines were preparing for a terrible battle with the Israelites. David's deceit was now to put him in an awkward position. Naturally Achish called upon him to assist. David could not deceive him now. He answered vaguely: "Thou shalt know what thy servant will do," which the king immediately supposed meant the warm promise of help. To frame your words that they will convey a meaning different to your intention is called "prevari-cation," which is nothing better than skilful lying. Fortunately, the lords of the Philistines unconsciously came to his assistance. For, when they saw David and his men in the ranks, they were very angry with the king and said, "What are these Hebrews doing here; do not trust them; who knows but that at the last moment they will join the enemy? Send them back." The king explained to David that he trusted him, but that he would not oppose the wishes of his lords, so he had better take his men out of the Philistine ranks. David pretended to be very sorry, but we know that he was glad to be saved from fighting against his own people.

But a sad state of affairs met them when they marched back to Ziklag. Cowardly taking advantage of the absence of the men, the Amalekites made an attack on the town, burnt it and carried off all the women and children, besides everything they could lay their hands upon. The Amalekites always were

mean and cowardly, from the days of Moses when they stole behind the Israelites, cutting down the sick and the wounded. The men were heartbroken with grief and wept till they could weep no longer. Then up rose a few -whom. grief had made unreasonable, as it so often does—and turning against David, cried: "He is the cause of all our troubles, let us stone him."

But this ungrateful counsel did not prevail. For David, always the active and practical, said: "Let us not waste time in upbraiding each other, but let us rise and pursue the Amalekites." This gave a better turn to their thoughts; it sounded like hope, and soon they were on the road again pursuing at full speed. But the long and hurried march began to exhaust their strength; two hundred of them could go no further and were left behind to look after the baggage. The remaining four hundred went on alone. A wounded Egyptian, whom they found abandoned by the wayside, and whom they befriended, directed them to the path taken by the Amalekites. Soon they overtook them enjoying themselves with the plunder. The struggle was long and stubborn but the robbers yielded at last, and many were glad to take to their camels and run. David and his men were soon on the road back, with their wives and children safe and sound, with not only their goods secured, but with a rich booty of sheep, cattle and camels as well. So David won the confidence of his followers once more.

They soon reached the two hundred who had been

left by the wayside, and some greedy men were for not dividing the spoil with them. "No," said David sternly, "it is only fair that those who take care of the baggage should share equally with those who engage in battle." And that became a law in Israel afterwards. To his friends throughout Judah, he sent presents from the Amalekite spoil. They were soon back at Ziklag and at peace again. But stirring events were happening in Israel.

Was it David's duty to join Saul's forces?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

A historian compares David to Coriolanus the Roman, who also took refuge among his nation's foes – the Volscians. The contrast between the two men is stronger than the similarity. Coriolanus made war against his countrymen; David refused to do so, but secretly helped them at the peril of his life. Themistocles, the Athenian, also fled to his enemy, the king of Persia.

The Geshurites lived near Philistia and must not be confounded with the people of Geshur up north in Syria.

Read "Conduct as a Fine Art" (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.), chap. iv.—"Truth."

For a similar rule about division of spoil, see Numbers xxx. 27

POTTERY UNEARTHED AT JERUSALEM.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE DEFEAT ON GILBOA.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass."**
Psalm xxxvii. 5.

Once more Saul took the field against his nation's foes But his old courage and his old faith were gone. These two qualities are usually found together His heart was heavy and he was full of doubt and misgiving. Perhaps, too, he was a little conscience-stricken that he had driven David, the champion, out of the country and at a time when his help was so sorely needed. Samuel, his earlier advisor, was dead too. Saul seemed to be left alone.

In a dark moment of doubt, losing his trust in God, he actually sought out a witch at Endor (situated on Little Hermon), to ask her how this battle with the Philistines would fare. She pretended to call up the spirit of Samuel, and through him told Saul that he would be defeated. This, of course, was easy to foretell, because the king's fears made it seem likely.

It is well that you should know that witches and magicians can no more look into the future than we ourselves. Those who pretend they can, are usually impostors, who take advantage of the weakness of foolish people. God in His wisdom and love keeps from us the knowledge of things about to happen.

He asks us to trust Him, to do our best, and all will be well.

The Philistines were encamped at Shunem. They must have reached this point by marching north and then east. It is easy to get from the Plain of Sharon to the Plain of Jezreel, where the battle was about to be fought. On the Plain the advantage was with the Philistines, for there they could use their chariots and horsemen, which Israel lacked. Saul and his army took their station in the Plain and the fatal battle began. It was the story of the fall of Shiloh over again, when the ark of God was taken. Saul saw his warriors falling all around him, until Mount Gilboa, up which they retreated, was covered with the slain. Triumph followed the Philistines everywhere. Saul's three sons fell, fighting to the last, and among them, oh, sad to tell it, our beloved Jonathan. But the fearless Saul had not yielded yet, although the arrows were flying thick and fast. He was wounded at last, and he knew it was death. Should he die by the hands of the idolatrous Philistines? Never! Turning to his armor-bearer, he said, "Thrust me through with thy sword that I be slain not by the Philistines." But his faithful servant shrank from laying his hands upon Israel's anointed. Then the old hero-warrior, not to be thwarted, pointed his sword to his breast and hurled himself upon it. Faithful to the end, his armor-bearer followed his example.

The defeat on Gilboa was followed by defeat in many of the surrounding places. The day after the battle, the victors explored the field of the slain to strip them of their armor. They came across the bodies of Saul and his sons. That was a find, indeed! They cut off their heads and tore off their armor, and sent these trophies of triumph throughout all their land, to spread the story of their victory, and placed Saul's armor in the temple of their idol. In true barbaric style they took the bodies of Saul and his sons and fastened them to the wall of Beth-Shan, in Issachar, to strike terror into the hearts of their enemies. But the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead had never forgotten Saul's kindness, when he had roused all Israel to rescue them from cruel Nahash the Ammonite. So some of their picked, valiant men stole forth at night, crossed the Jordan, and undertook the perilous task of taking down the bodies. Reverently they buried them in their own land, under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and mourned their loss for many days.

When should we try to find out what is about to happen?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

In the days of Samuel, the righteous Saul had severely punished all witches and dealers in magic. Although he believed, as did all people of his age, that wizards and sorcerers were gifted with occult powers and could foretell the future, still he felt that the knowledge was obtained by dark and unholy means. That belief has prevailed almost to our own time.

It is not surprising that Saul was defeated, since some of Israel's best men had joined David. See 1 Chron. xii.

Four memorable battles were fought in the Plain of Esdraelons (Jezreel): (1) the Battle of Kishon, see page 47 ; (2) the Battle of Jezreel, see page 54 ; (3) the battle of Gilboa and (later in this history] (4) the Battle of Megiddo. Jezreel, the principal town, gives its name to the whole plain.

The act of the people of Jabesh-Gilead presents a lesson in gratitude.

Read "Raising of Samuel" and "Song of Saul," Readings and Recitations, pp. 90, 92.

The Future : "The hidden things belong to God, but the revealed things belong to us and to our children that we may fulfil his law."—Deut. xxix. 29.

"Lead, kindly light! amid the encircling gloom
Lead Thou me on; keep Thou my feet,
I do not ask to see the distant scene;
One step enough for me."—J. H. N.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"THE MIGHTY FALLEN."

BIBLE TEXT: **"For I should have denied God who is above, if I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted myself up when evil found him"**
Job xxxi. 28-29

Thus passed away Israel's first king. In spite of some serious drawbacks in his character, he was a man of sterling virtues. He was every inch a warrior king and his spear was never absent from his side. The first king, the beginner of a new order of things, he

had to meet difficulties that we, perhaps do not sufficiently bring to mind. It is to his credit that there was no rebellion in Israel during all the twenty years that he reigned. He was as modest and simple on the throne as at the plough. He was brave, frank and sternly just. Religious even to the extreme of fanaticism; very cruel and fierce when stirred to jealousy, yet quick to be moved by holy influences.

Again, we have seen that he was superstitious, moody, impulsive and of ungovernable passion. He was not a man of judgment; and towards the end of his life his mind may have become weak. Lacking the righteousness of Samuel that never faltered, he did not entirely win the approval of the prophet party; ungenerous to his rival David, and needlessly cruel in the slaughter of the Gibeonites, whom ancient Israel had sworn to defend, he was not popular with the people. Thus his life seemed to be a disappointment to himself and in a measure to his nation, and the knowledge of this saddened his later years. We rejoice with him in his early life, we pity him in his later decline. His character, his career, his end, are full of precious lessons for us all

A messenger rushed into David's presence at Ziklag. "Whence come you," asked David, dreading bad news. "I have escaped from the camp of Israel; the people are fleeing in all directions; many are the slain, and Saul and Jonathan are among them." He

further said that, seeing Saul in the throes of death, he had slain him at his own request. He also brought Saul's crown and bracelets, thinking to be rewarded. How little he understood David! "How dare-t thou put thy hand against the Lord's anointed; thy blood be upon thine own head; thou shalt die."

Forgetful of all past enmity, and feeling nothing but sorrow and grief for the sad end of his king and his friend, David and, also, his men rent their clothes, mourned and fasted and wept aloud. Here is David's lamentation over Saul and Jonathan:

"Thy glory, O Israel, lies slain upon the high places.
How are the mighty fallen!

Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Askelon,
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the idolatrous triumph.
Ye mountains of Gilboa, let no dew nor rain fall upon you,
Ye fields and hills of death—
For there the shield of the mighty all stained was cast away
The shield of Saul as of one not anointed.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives.
And in their death they were not divided.
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
Ye daughters of Israel, weep for Saul
Who clothed you with scarlet in splendor,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle

Oh, Jonathan, slain upon the high places,

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan.
Very dear hast thou been to me,
Thy love to me was wonderful,
More tender than the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen
And their weapons of war destroyed!

What quality do you like best in Saul?

NOTES TO TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Illustrate every trait of Saul mentioned in this chapter, by an incident in his history. This will serve the additional purpose of a review.

Saul was in warmer sympathy with the ideals of the prophets in the earlier than in the latter years of his reign.

Explain "An Elegy" and read "Gray's Elegy."

David's lament was called the "Song of the Bow" because of the mention of Jonathan's Bow.

"Thy *glory*, oh Israel," is sometimes translated "gazelle," which was applied to Jonathan, because of his personal beauty and his swiftness of foot.

Read Browning's "Saul"—Readings and Recitations, p. 81.

"Tell it not in Gath" became a proverb, see Micah *i.* 10.

A VEHICLE IN SOLOMON'S TIME.

BOOK III.

THE HOUSE OF JUDAH.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE "LION" TRIBE.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise; thy father's sons shall bow down before thee. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."** *Genesis xlix.* 8-10.

Do you remember, in the story of Joseph that is told in the first volume of this book, that it was JUDAH who suggested that Joseph should be sold instead of being killed, and that it was Judah, too, who advised Jacob to entrust Benjamin to his care, promising to be surety for the lad? In both of these instances his advice was taken and that of the older brothers rejected. Judah showed that force of character that naturally placed him at the head of his brethren These incidents seem to tell us in advance the important place that the tribe of Judah would occupy among the other tribes We have now reached a point in the history where the leadership of the nation is about to pass into the hands of a man of Judah—David.

In turning to Joseph we have just looked back some centuries from David's time. If we looked forward a hundred years we would find the nation split in two divisions—ISRAEL and JUDAH. Later still, we would see "Israel" overthrown and lost, while "Judah," after passing through captivity and sorrow, is allowed to begin again as a new nation - JUDÆA. In course of time the word Judean became shortened into JEW. We to-day are the descendants of the Judeans—the living survivors of the children of Israel. So you see how concerned we are in the rise of the House of Judah.

Little had, so far, been heard of this tribe. Moses came from the tribe of Levi; Joshua and Samuel from Ephraim; Saul from Benjamin. None of the Judges sprang from Judah, except Othniel, of whom we know very little. Judah had very few towns. It had but one city of any note, Hebron; the rest were mere villages for cattle-breeders. Judah and Simeon remained almost as Moses had left them—peaceful shepherds. Living in the south, they were at first somewhat cut off from the rest of the tribes. But through the energy of Samuel, who did so much to make Israel a nation, they were gradually brought in closer contact with the rest of the people. Through the renown of David, the tribe of Judah was now brought fully to the front. His fame had traveled through the length and breadth of the land "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands,"

had become a proverb. What wonder, then, that at Saul's death the people should speak of David as the most able man to be his successor—a man most likely to win the respect and fear of their enemies.

The events now to be told commence a new book in the Bible called "Second Samuel." This name is given, although Samuel's life and work are already over, as though to teach us that the influence of a good man does not end with his death.

Is it not an honor to be a Jew?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

That which takes longest to ripen reaches the highest fruition.

Hebron is one of the oldest cities in the world. It is situated in a valley surrounded by rocky hills. It was the burial place of the patriarchs and part of the inheritance of Caleb.

Part of the blessing of Judah reads: "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up; he stooped down, he crouched as a lion, and as a lioness who shall rouse him up?" Hence, the lion became the insignia of Judah. It will then be readily seen why the Hebrew name of 'Leonard' is Jehudah.

David was the *youngest* son of Jesse. How often the eldest boy of the family, from whom so much was expected, to whom so many privileges were given, and upon whom so many responsibilities were and still are placed, has been eclipsed by a younger brother. Give examples. Again, the younger children often have advantages which the older ones never enjoyed.

Read 1 Sam. xvi. See Vol. I., p. 58.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

RIVALS FOR THE THRONE.

BIBLE TEXT: **"He loveth transgression who loveth strife."** *Proverbs xvii. 19.*

After the news of Saul's death had reached David, he and his men left the land of the Philistines; exile was no longer necessary. They went at once to the chief city of their tribe, Hebron. Here the men of Judah anointed David king—but only over their own tribe. David at once sent this message across the river to the men of Jabesh-Gilead:

> "Blessed be ye of the Lord that ye have shown kindness unto your lord Saul, and have buried him; may God show kindness and truth to you. I, too, will reward this kindness. Let your hands be strong and be ye valiant. Saul, your lord, is dead and the House of Judah have anointed me king over them."

But the kingship was not to go unchallenged. It was rare indeed in ancient days for succession to a throne to follow without bloodshed. Although Saul's three sons, including Jonathan, had been left dead on the battlefield of Gilboa, there was yet another son left—Ishbaal, usually called Ishbosheth. Abner the commander-in-chief of Saul's forces, set him up as a rival king. But Ishbosheth was a man who lacked all strength of character. Still, at the call of the energetic Abner, many rallied to his side, which showed, too, their fidelity to the house of Saul. JOAB,

son of Zeruiah, David's sister, who is about to play a great part in these pages, was at the head of David's men.

Both parties met at the pool of Gibeon in Benjamin, which was really the frontier line between David's and Saul's allies. They hesitated to begin a battle, hating to slay their own brethren; but it had to come at last Beginning with a trial of strength, they were soon engaged in deadly battle. Many fell, Abner losing three hundred men and Joab but eighteen. Asahel, brother of Joab, "as swift as a young roe," pursued Abner; after begging him to withdraw, Abner with regret and sorrow was compelled to strike him with his sword in self-defence; the thrust killed him. The opposing parties met again; but Abner, who wished to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, called out to Joab:

> "Shall the sword devour forever? Knowest thou not it will be bitterness in the latter end? How long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from pursuing their brethren?"

Joab felt the force of this appeal, blew the trumpet and called off his men; but the struggle was not yet over.

Daily David grew stronger and his opponent weaker. At last Ishbosheth quarreled with his best friend Abner, because he had married Rizpah, one of Saul's widows. So, seeing that he was supporting a lost cause and an ungrateful man, the general entered into a league with David to make him king of all

Israel. He now threw all his influence into David's cause. He sent messages to the elders of Israel, reminding them that once they had wanted to make David king—why not crown him now? Abner had been the only support of Ishbosheth during his two years' nominal reign over Israel, so his withdrawal ended nearly all opposition to David. But the revengeful Joab was not satisfied that things should pass off so peacefully. He was jealous of Abner's favor with David, and had never forgiven him for slaying his brother Asahel, although it was but in self-defence. So, inviting the unsuspecting Abner to a friendly talk, Joab basely slew him

David never forgave that crime. In bitter and scornful words, that Joab could not easily forget, he denounced him: "May the guilt of his blood fall upon you and your house." He confessed that, though king, he was too weak to punish these "sons of Zeruiah," that they were too much for him. David declared a public mourning for Abner, making even his slayers rend their garments and put on sackcloth. He was buried at Hebron. David wept at the death of the warrior who had tried to dispute his throne, and the people, seeing his tears, wept also. He would take no food that day.

> "Know ye not that a prince and a great man hath fallen this day in Israel? As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so did he fall."

After the death of Abner two brutal men slew

the weak Ishbosheth, stealing into his house at noon, when his servants dozed in the midday heat. They brought the news in triumph to David and expected to be rewarded. But they were mistaken in their man. Said David:

> "As the Lord liveth who hath redeemed my soul out of adversity, when one told me saying, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him and slew him. Such was the reward I gave him for his tidings. How much more when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed, shall I not require his blood of your hand and take you away from the earth?"

At his stern command, the two murderers were put to death.

There was no rival to David now. Israel needed a man of power to rule over them in those stormy times. Why hesitate longer to place David at their head? So the choice of Judah was confirmed by all the tribes: David was made king of all Israel.

Should Abner have deserted Ishbosheth?

NOTES TO TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Ish-baal. Later, Israel did not like the heathen ending *baal* to their names and changed them in every case to *bosheth*, "shame."

To marry a king's widow was in ancient times regarded as a design against the throne. But Abner could hardly have been guilty of any such intention in asking to marry Rizpah.

CHAPTER XL.

A NEW KING AND A NEW CAPITAL.
1020 B. C. E.

BIBLE TEXT: **"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people."**
Psalm cxxv. 2.

David was the son of Jesse, a maker of hair cloth, and could trace back his ancestry to Ruth, who will always be remembered for her faithfulness to Naomi. His mother's name is not given. He was born in Bethlehem-Judah, and you have been told the early story of his life and how he gradually rose from humble place to great fame. First a shepherd, then, for his bravery in slaying the giant Philistine, made the king's armor-bearer. Then captain of a thousand; later still, he is next to the commander-in-chief and becomes son-in-law of the king. Now, at last, at thirty, the age at which Joseph was made ruler of Egypt, we see him monarch of all Israel.

It is sad to think that strife should have been necessary to secure the throne. But that was all over now. Messengers from the different tribes came to Hebron to pay their respects to David:

> "We are thy bone and thy flesh; in times past when Saul was king over us, it was thou that didst lead Israel forth to battle. Verily hath the Lord said to thee: 'Thou shalt feed my people, thou shalt be prince over Israel.'"

David made a solemn covenant with them before the Lord, promising to rule them justly and to respect

their rights, and asking their fidelity and obedience in return. Thus was David anointed Israel's king.

But a strong hand was needed to guide the young nation. Civil war had upset the country. Tribal jealousies had to be appeased and opposing parties called to order. The Philistines held half the land again. Indeed, they no sooner heard that David was king and that all the tribes were uniting in acknowledging him, than they at once hurried an army into the valley of Rephaim, in Judah. They naturally feared that, under a leader like David, Israel might try to shake off the Philistine yoke, for, after the defeat on Gilboa, some tribes had become their vassals again.

So David had no sooner entered into his royal honors than he must be up and fighting. Nor should it be supposed that he had a large army, although king of Israel. They did not all flock to his standard at once. Still he had his band of picked warriors, his "old guard," who had been true to him in all his years of hardship. He did not wait for many to come to his side, but at once made such a vigorous attack on the Philistines that the shock scattered them. They left even their idols behind them, which David seized and burnt. Once they had taken Israel's ark in battle; the tables were turned now.

But the Philistines were unwilling to give up the fight without a further struggle. They were soon in line in the valley of Rephaim again. David had not men enough to make an open attack. So he and his

warriors stole behind some mulberry trees. Screened by the shelter of the trees and unheard because of their rustling, they were able to reach the rear of the enemy, and so thoroughly discomfited them that they began to flee; David followed in hot pursuit, smiting them from Geba back to their own plains. Many a large army has been defeated by a small force in that way.

This victory over the most dangerous enemy helped to strengthen David's power and win the confidence of his people. He was now prepared for an engagement that was to have far greater consequences for the future.

There was a city on the borders of Judah and Benjamin, about thirty-two miles from the Mediterranean, called Jebus that was still in the possession of the Jebusites. It had not been conquered so far, chiefly because its natural situation made it dangerous, if not impossible, to attack. Yet, this stronghold in the midst of Israel stood in the way both of its security and its union, for it was an excellent rallying place for their enemies. It was a city fortified by nature, built on steep hills that were very hard to scale. On the west and south it was surrounded by a valley, and on the east by a deep ravine, through which the river Kedron flowed. Then again a valley cut through the middle of this city on the cliffs, dividing it into two separate forts. The north side, being more open to attack, was fortified by walls and towers. So

its wonderfully protected position had passed into a proverb, "Even the blind and the lame could defend Jebus."

But this boast did not frighten David. His brave general, Joab, discovered an unseen watercourse in the rocks by which an entrance could be obtained into the citadel. The heights were scaled and the fortress city seized. It was the last and the greatest triumph over the Canaanite natives of Palestine. There was no longer any doubt of Israel's conquest now. They had made this land their home.

From this time on Jebus, to be known in future as JERUSALEM, was to play an important part in the world's history. David partly rebuilt it and more strongly fortified it. Its western quarter was named Zion and was also styled "The City of David." Jerusalem was made the capital of the country in place of Hebron; and from its commanding position and excellent location between north and south, it well deserved to be. Here, too, David built a cedar palace. Israel's fame and properity were growing, and they were prepared to do great things.

The increase of the army and the strengthening of the boundaries of Israel were only supplying its *material* wants. But David did not forget the higher and holier needs of his people. He was anxious to build them a Temple for worship.

"I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth in curtains."

So he collected treasures for this purpose, but the actual undertaking was finally left to his son. He decided, however, at the advice of his trusty and faithful counselor, Nathan the prophet, of whom we shall hear again, to bring up the ark to Jerusalem. This made the new capital the religious, as well as the civil, centre of the country. Here, amid music, dancing and great rejoicings, it was placed in a tent prepared for it. Many from great distances came to witness the imposing ceremony. Bread, meat and raisin-cakes were distributed among the people. In his joy at the bringing up of the ark, David danced before the Lord. This displeased Michal, his wife, who thought it undignified for the king to dance before the people. How little she understood his warm religious nature!

As for the people at large, they still did not regard the ark in quite the right way. They thought it could work wonders. They were a little bit afraid of it, too. They would know better one day.

What do you think of David dancing before the ark?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Like Jerusalem, Sardis, capital of Lydia (Asia Minor), was also conquered at the very place where it seemed sufficiently guarded. Gibraltar also.

Situated on the borders both of Judah and Benjamin, the new capital helped to unite the opposing factions.

Jerusalem has grown to be the beloved city of many different nations scattered through the world.

For a very graphic account of the bringing up of the ark to Jerusalem and of David's intention to build the Temple, read 1 Chron. xvi., xxviii., xxix.

In connection with bringing the ark into Jerusalem, read Ps. xxiv., also Ps. lxviii., cv. 1-15, cxxxii.

The prophet Nathan is said to have been the teacher of Solomon and the historian of David's reign.

CHAPTER XLI.

FOR THE SAKE OF JONATHAN.

BIBLE TEXT: **"I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame, I was a father to the needy, and the cause of him that I knew not, I searched out."**
Job xxix. 15-16.

"Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" asked David. This may seem to us a natural request of a kind-hearted man who had not forgotten his old friend. But in ancient times it was considered usual to *slay* all the relatives of the last royal house, unless the throne came by regular succession and not by force of arms. They were always afraid of conspiracy. David, then, took a new departure and on the side of humanity.

The best person of whom to make enquiries was Ziba, Saul's old steward. From him David learnt

that Jonathan had left a little son who was a cripple. For, when the lad was five years old, and the awful news was brought that Saul and Jonathan had been slain on Gilboa, his frightened nurse picked up the child and fled. In her haste and terror she dropped the little fellow and he never had the full use of his feet afterwards. In that age of war, when physical strength was the chief requisite, the lame were despised, for much the same reason that women were slighted and overlooked—they could not take up arms against the enemy.

This surviving son of Jonathan was named Meribbaal, usually called Mephibosheth for a reason already given. David sent for him, and when he reached the presence of the king, he bowed low, his face touching the ground. It was customary to show very extravagant honors to a king. "Fear nothing," said David gently, "I will certainly show thee kindness, for the sake of Jonathan, thy father; I will restore to thee all the estates that belonged to Saul; thou shalt eat bread at my table altogether, like one of the king's sons." "I am of no consequence at all that you should treat me like this," said Meribbaal gratefully and humbly. David did nothing by halves. Ziba was cal'ed; he was told that he, his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, must take entire charge of the young man's lands and in every way devote themselves to the service of Prince Meribbaal.

It is our duty to be kind to all, but our first con-

sideration should be given to those who may not be blessed with the full advantages that are ours—who may be blind or lame or delicate, or too poor to dress as nicely as some of us. Yet I have known boys that were cruel enough to make fun of one of their playmates that stammered or limped, not knowing how their taunts cut to the heart and make the scalding tears flow.

To Saul's house David was not so kind. Saul had slain the Gibeonites, although Joshua, you will remember, promised they should never be harmed. The people thought that a famine that now occurred, though it was years after, was sent because Saul's family had not been punished for the broken vow! So awfully superstitious were people in those days David, then, at the urging of the Gibeonites, delivered up to them seven of Saul's sons and grandsons to be put to death—for his sin. But there is one beautiful incident in the sad story. It is the devotion of Rizpah, mother of two of the sons. She would not leave the dead bodies night or day, until they were permitted to be buried. There is a well-known picture that shows her watching over them.

Why do some people despise foreigners?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Read "Conduct as a Fine Art," chap. vi.—Kindness.

Among all the Arabs there is a law of blood revenge, which is

unfortunately treated as a religious obligation. The Corsican "vendetta" is a survival of the same barbaric practice.

Read Tennyson's "Rizpah," which is a modern story in very different setting, but depicting that same mother love, which neither time nor belief can change. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

Look back to Chap. iv.

Read Vol. I, Chap. xli.—"Duties to the Stranger, and Laws of Humanity."

CHAPTER XLII.

DAVID'S CONQUESTS.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Strive not with a man without cause if he hath done thee no harm."** *Proverbs iii. 30.*

Now was the time, once and for all, to make Israel a strong and powerful nation, by overthrowing those surrounding enemies that were a constant danger not only to their peace, but even to their national existence.

The Philistines came first and were so thoroughly subdued, that not only did Israel cease paying them tribute, but their positions were completely reversed and they became vassals of Israel. Even Gath, the "mother city," was taken out of their control. We are told in several different places of David's engagements with the Philistines, though all probably belong to the same war. In one particular battle David grew quite faint, and a brawny giant, named Ish-benob,

with uplifted brazen spear was about to slay him, when Joab's brother, Abishai, generally styled in the Bible "the son of Zeruiah," stepped forward and parried the blow. The king was saved, but they determined never more to risk the life of their king in battle, "lest the light of Israel be extinguished."

Having overthrown their enemies at home, David was now ready to meet those on the borders. This was a good opportunity to strengthen and enlarge his boundaries, as neither Egypt nor Assyria were just then sufficiently powerful to interfere with his conquests With such brave men around him, we are not surprised that he also defeated the Moabites on the southeast. They were made tributary, that is, they were partly subdued, but allowed a certain independence on the payment of taxes—*tribute*. That had been Israel's position once with the Philistines. Although cruelty was the order of the age, we cannot understand why David should have treated the Moabites so barbarously, slaying two thirds of their prisoners of war. The Talmud explains this treatment by saying that the king of Moab, instead of protecting David's parents left in his care, murdered them. Another suggests that the Moabites acted basely in some way not recorded. It is also not to be forgotten that many kings of David's day would put to death all their prisoners of war.

David next turned his arms against the Syrians, more correctly called "Aramæans." Look to the

north on your map and you will find Aram or Syria between Phœnicia on the west and "The River" on the north-east. "The River" in the Bible means the Euphrates. Do you remember that Abraham came "over the River" from Chaldea and was therefore called a Hebrew (a crosser)? But to return to the Syrians. They formed three small kingdoms: Hamath and Zobah in the north, near the river Orontes, and Damascus much further down The kingdom of which Damascus was the capital, was the most powerful of these Syrian provinces, and we shall hear a good deal of it in the next Book.

David defeated Hadad-ezer, king of Zobah, and took as spoil the golden shields of his bodyguard, a great quantity of bronze and a hundred chariot horses. Damascus was next subdued, for a time at least, and its people became David's servants and brought him presents. Toi, king of the third stronghold, Hamath, seeing David's success, thought it most prudent to be submissive and friendly to David at once, and sent him vessels of gold, silver and bronze. Many of these treasures were put aside to be used later in the building of the Temple. Over all these Syrian strongholds, David appointed governors.

Next Edom in the south was subdued, more completely than any surrounding nation. Garrisons were stationed in every part of it. David would now have liked to rest from war. But the Ammonites forced him to take up arms again. It happened in this way.

Nahash, king of the Ammonites—perhaps son of the Nahash whom Saul had punished—died. David sent ambassadors to his son Hanun, expressing sympathy with his loss and good wishes for his new kingdom. This exchange of courtesies between monarchs on such occasions is a very ancient custom that is still preserved. But the advisers of Hanun persuaded him to mistrust these kind attentions. "David has not sent these men to comfort you, but to spy out your city and later on to overthrow it." Some people in those days, as in these, always looked for bad motives behind kindly deeds.

Hanun treated David's servants shamefully—shaved off half their beards, cut off part of their clothing and sent them away. This treatment was the greatest insult that could be shown, for the beard was the badge of manhood and dignity. The Ammonites were so sure that such treatment would drive David to war, that they decided to be first in the field. They sent to the Syrians, knowing they would be anxious to throw off David's yoke, and asked them to join forces against Israel. But Joab and Abishai, each at the head of a separate force, were a match for these two armies and the mercenaries that the Ammonites had summoned to their call. Joab thus addressed his army:

> "Be of good courage and be men for our people's sake and for the sake of the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth unto him good."

When the Syrians took to flight on Joab's fierce

attack, the Ammonites followed their cowardly example. So Israel easily won the first battle.

The Syrians now gathered all their forces for one mighty blow. But it was of no avail, for David himself now entered the field with another army; and they were more thoroughly subdued than before. A little later the war was resumed against the Ammonites. After nearly two years' stubborn struggle, they were also suppressed with as great cruelty as the Ammonites had once proposed to treat Israel. Their city, Rabbah, called "the city of waters" from the streams flowing through it, was taken. Joab summoned David to finish the battle, that he might have the honor of the victory.

Had Hanun reason to suspect David?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

The Roman generals sometimes invited their emperors to finish a battle to receive the honor of the victory.

The Syrian war is the only war of this period that has left a trace on the records of contemporary nations.

None of these nations—Syria. Moab or Edom—were entirely conquered and absorbed by Israel. Most of these conquests were lost in the next reign. For David's wars were less offensive than defensive; Israel had to fight to make their land secure. Even into their wars, a religious impulse entered that gave them enthusiasm and courage. Notice Joab's speech before the battle with Ammon.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ISRAEL'S GOLDEN AGE.

BIBLE TEXT: **"The Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh to the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh to the heart."** 1 *Samuel xvi.* 7.

Who could withstand David and his brave men! How sturdy they were! Wondrous deeds are told of their strength and valor. One was as valiant as Samson, and put three hundred to flight. On another occasion a small band of David's chosen warriors stood in a field of barley and defended it against the enemy as courageously as the Spartans defended the Pass of Thermopylæ. Another of his warriors went into a pit that was half-full of snow and slew a lion that had taken refuge there.

A beautiful incident is told of David's earlier battles that shows not only his chivalry, but also the heroism and fidelity of his followers. David was taking refuge in the cave of Adullam and the Philistines were encamped in Bethlehem, David's birthplace. A feeling of home-sickness came over him "Oh! that some one could get me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate." No water tastes so sweet as that of our own home! The wish was no sooner uttered than three of his faithful men, regardless of the danger, and anxious only to gratify the longing of their beloved chief, cut through the ranks of the Philistines, drew some water from the well and

brought it to David. But he would not drink it, it had cost too much. He poured it out before the Lord.

> "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this; is not this the blood of the men who have put their lives in jeopardy?"

David's dominions now extended to the Euphrates The little land of Israel had become a great nation. The tribes had knit into one people at last. All were loyal to David. He also received the homage of many Hebrew clans that had never really yielded to Saul.

An alliance was made with the Phœnician kingdom of Tyre. It was natural that these neighbors should be friends. They were common enemies of the Philistines and had been both overrun by them in earlier days. Again, the Phœnician language and the Hebrew were much alike, and you know what a bond language is. Further, the Phœnicians were among the first traders in the world and Tyre was the centre for art and architecture. To be at peace with Israel meant that their caravans, loaded with merchandise, could pass direct from Tyre right through the land of Israel to Egypt. Perhaps, Israelites and Tyrians together often went forth on the same expeditions. On the other hand this friendly agreement was useful to David, for he obtained from the Tyrian king cedar trees, and employed Phœnician carpenters and masons. Perhaps you are surprised that Israel did not have their own mechanics. Do not forget that it was a young nation still, knowing little of the arts and crafts Like most

young nations, it had to import fine workmen and fine work, much as the United States has had to do almost to this day. These Tyrians built David's cedar palace and also cypress houses for Joab and his generals.

All this prosperity and power tempted David to give up the old Hebrew simplicity, so earnestly preached by Samuel and the prophets. Gradually he began to form a court of great state and magnificence. Like all Eastern kings of that day and this, he had many wives and his palace was filled with luxuries. His table was loaded with dainties; music and dancing and richly dressed people made it very gay. David sat in his palace on a beautiful throne, with a jeweled crown hung above his head, that had been taken in the spoil from the Ammonites. Here he would receive ambassadors from foreign lands, and would also decide all cases that were brought to him for judgment. He earned the name of a just king.

Among his officers, Joab was over the host. Jehoshaphat was the Recorder or Chronicler; he kept a record of everything of importance that happened in the land; in these chronicles was gathered much of the material that was later written up into history. Zadok and Ahimelech were the chief priests; Seraiah was the Scribe, *i. e.*, the king's secretary, and Adoram was the Treasurer. Benaiah had charge of the *Cherethites* and the *Pelethites* – body-guards of foreign soldiers. There were also superintendents of storehouses and granaries, overseers of estates, fields and

herds. The elders or princes represented the tribes before the king. In time of war each tribe had to send a number of men, over twenty years of age, to the national army.

Of course it was an Absolute Monarchy—there was no Constitution and no Parliament or Congress. Still, there were certain ancient rights and customs existing among the people, which even the king could not well despise. Otherwise, the king's word was the law of the land as in nearly all countries of the olden time. His person was considered sacred and he was treated with that extreme reverence that the ancients always showed their rulers.

But all these honors were paid to the *office*, not to the *man*. Was David nobler, truer, purer, because of all these splendors? We shall see.

Why would David not drink the water of Bethlehem?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Cherethites and Pelethites.—This king's guard may, perhaps, have been Philistines. It seems to have been a custom, both ancient and modern, for the monarch to surround himself with a trusted guard not of native, but foreign, soldiers. The body-guard of the Roman Emperors were Germans, of the French, Swiss. Tell the story of the *Loewen-Denkmal*, in Lucerne.

An instance of an Absolute Monarchy to-day is Russia; of a Constitutional Monarchy, England.

Read "Water of Bethlehem Gate," Readings and Recitations, p. 87.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"THOU ART THE MAN."

BIBLE TEXT: **"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."** *Isaiah lv. 7.*

The Bible never conceals or attempts to smooth over the sins of its heroes. It has told us of David's triumphs, it will now tell us of a deed so shameful that it is hard to believe it of the favorite king of Israel.

One warm evening, David was walking on the roof of his palace, which in all Eastern houses is laid out like a garden, and is a delightful, cool retreat. From the roof he saw a beautiful woman named Bathsheba, and fell in love with her. But she was the wife of another man, Uriah the Hittite, a soldier as faithful as he was brave. But David was filled with the burning desire to possess her, and in his mad passion forgot his duty as king and as man.

At last he dared to steal her away from her home, and then, afraid of the consequences, he secretly sent word to Joab, who was conducting the Ammonite war, advising him to put Uriah in the thickest of the fight. Joab obeyed his master and, as might have been expected, Uriah was killed. This left David free to make the widow of the fallen soldier his wife, and

she was soon brought to his palace. But great monarch though he was, whose deeds none dared to question—this sin could not be passed in silence. Mark the words with which the Bible closes this chapter: "*But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.*"

I have already told you something about the prophets. They were fearless men, loving God and the Right, and not afraid to rebuke even the king himself, if they thought he had done wrong. What would have been the moral condition of the people without them. Perhaps, none of the noble men who lived later, and who knew so much more, better deserved the title of prophet than Nathan. He had heard of the king's double sin. It is not easy to hush up wickedness, and thank God, it is not. He entered the presence of David, and, in order to bring home to the monarch a realization of his crime, he put it in the form of another story:

> "There were two men in a city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished. It grew up together with him and his children. It ate of his own morsel, drank of his cup, and was unto him as his own child. Now there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd to feed the wayfarer, but took the poor man's lamb."

David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan:

"As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die, he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

Then, turning his stern face full upon David and pointing the finger of scorn at him, the prophet Nathan thundered, "*Thou art the man.*" "You are king—everything is yours, you have wives in plenty, and if all this abundance were too little, you could have had yet more. Why have you despised the word of God to do evil in His sight. You have killed Uriah the Hittite, you have stolen his wife. I predict that woe will come upon your house for this." Ashamed and repentant, the guilty king cried, "I have sinned against the Lord."

In his rebuke Nathan did not touch on the darkest side of David's deed, the breaking of the Sixth and the Seventh Commandments. He dwelt simply on the selfishness and the cruelty of it. He pointed out how detestable was even the most favorable view of his sin, leaving David to imagine what he might have said of the deeper crime. Thus his very silence was more terrible than his words.

The child of David and Bathsheba became very sick, and the conscience-stricken king believed that the child's illness was sent to punish his own guilt. All night he lay upon the earth fasting and praying for the child. No one could move him or induce him to take food. Then came the sad news—"the child is dead."

His servants were afraid to tell him, so severe was his suffering even while there was yet hope. So they were very surprised at the quiet way in which he received the news. Calmly returning to his duties once more, he comforted his weeping wife. He explained the change to his wondering servants — "while the child lived I fasted and wept, not knowing what might be God's will; but now the child is dead; I cannot bring it back again; I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

The name of David and Bath-sheba's next child was SOLOMON. "Solomon" means "peace." Perhaps the peace of guilt confessed and bitterly atoned for had come to David at last.

What does David's repentance tell of his character?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Compare Nathan's parable with Jotham's allegory (Chap. xiii.) and explain the difference between these two figures of speech.

The law required that he who stole a lamb should pay fourfold (see Exod. xxii. 1).

We say "while there is life there is hope;" still the suffering of suspense is harder to bear than the knowledge of the worst.

Read the story of how Beruria comforted her husband, Rabbi Meir, on the death of their two sons—Polano's Talmud, p. 219

The child Solomon was also named *Jedidiah*, meaning "beloved of the Lord."

It speaks well for David that he made Nathan, who rebuked him, his adviser and friend. Read Psalm li. 1-17.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE FRUITS OF IDLENESS.

BIBLE TEXT: **"By slothfulness the roof sinketh in, and through idleness of the hands the house leaketh."** *Ecclesiastes x. 18.*

David had many wives, after the custom of his times, and the children of the different mothers were very often quarreling with each other. Bloodshed often followed from the bitter strife between the half brothers. Nothing is so harmful to our best qualities as a life of idleness. In this Eastern court of luxury, the pampered princes, passing lives of pleasure, having no duties, were often led into sin. Work is the best safeguard against mischief, and an industrious life is usually a pure one.

Amnon and Absalom, two of David's sons, were just such idle princes, and the Bible has little to say to their credit. Amnon wronged Absalom's sister Tamar, a good and modest girl. Absalom said nothing at the time, but he quietly planned revenge. He invited his brothers to a feast at the shearing of his sheep. When all were merry with wine, his servants, according to instructions previously given them, slew Amnon

Rumor, which always exaggerates evil, brought to David the awful news that *all* his sons were slain. With rent garments the distracted king lay upon the earth in the agony of despair. It was a relief to learn the truth at last, that only Amnon was dead. Absalom,

fearing his father's wrath, fled for refuge to his father-in-law, the king of Geshur, in Syria.

But love is stronger than all things. In spite of Absalom's crime, David's heart yearned toward the scapegrace, after he had been in exile some time, and he longed once more to have him at his side. But what would the people say if he took to his heart the slayer of his brother? Even though murder was not regarded with quite the horror with which we look upon it now, a grave crime it always was.

Joab, wishing to please the king, sought out a very clever woman, known as "the wise woman of Tekoa," and persuaded her to come before the king as a widow; under pretense of telling her sorrows, she was really to put before the king his own case and, in that way, win forgiveness for his son. Well, she told her story, and glad David was to pardon Absalom.

But while permitting him to return to Jerusalem, from which he had been absent now three years, the king still refused to see him. Things went on in this way for two years more. Absalom, growing impatient, sent for Joab, and insisted that he should obtain for him an audience with the king. A reconciliation at last took place, David kissed his son and all was well once more—at least for a time.

If you suppose that Absalom felt very humbled and sorry for all he had done and lived meekly in retirement after his sin and disgrace, then you have formed no idea of his character. He was very vain and fond

of display. To be sure, he was remarkably handsome —faultless in features and of fair complexion. His beautiful hair ran far down his back. He was no sooner at peace with his father than he indulged in more splendor than ever. He had a chariot and horses and fifty men to run before him. Would that love of show had been his worst fault! Alas! darker schemes were taking root in his base mind. He was David's eldest living son and, therefore, heir to the throne. But Absalom was impatient to be king. Again, in consequence of his offence, another might be chosen at his father's death or named by his father during his life-time. Absalom was determined to prevent any such possibility by conspiring against his father's throne at once!

He laid his wicked plans well, for he was a cunning man. When people came from all parts of the country to the city gate with their different disputes to be decided by the king, Absalom would get into conversation with them. He would ask what city they came from and what their cause was, adding that they could not expect to get justice from the king. Then he would hint that if *he* were king, how different things would be—justice would be done the people. Then he would embrace them, strangers though they were. Such beauty, such sympathy, such affection, and a royal prince, too. Is there any wonder that he "stole the hearts" of the Israelites?

Was not David, like Eli, too easy with his sons?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

In ancient times the brother rather than the father protected the sister and revenged her wrongs. Still Absalom may have made the ill-treatment of his sister excuse for slaying Amnon, who stood between him and the throne. See Leviticus xix. 18.

Notice that the old office of Judge was still included in the kingship.

The parable of the wise woman of Tekoa reminds us of Nathan's. In both cases the king is led to pass judgment on his own conduct. Tekoa was five miles south of Bethlehem and was the birthplace of the prophet Amos.

Polygamy brought many evils into the family life of the ancients.—See Deut. xvii. 11.

Had Absalom his father's character, then his sin and punishment might have reformed him and made him a better man. But he was thoroughly bad at heart.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"UNEASY LIES THE HEAD THAT WEARS A CROWN."

BIBLE TEXT: **"Whoso robbeth his father or his mother and saith it is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer."** *Proverbs xxviii. 24.*

Absalom's next step was to find some pretext for leaving the city without exciting suspicion. Going to the king, he said that while at Geshur he had promised to fulfil a religious duty; might he now visit the city of Hebron for the purpose of carrying out his holy vows? How often men assume the cloak of righteousness to cover deeds of darkness! Glad to see such

signs of piety in his wayward son, David gave his cordial consent: "Go in peace."

The traitor now sent spies throughout the whole land of Israel, telling them that when a signal was given by the sounding of a trumpet, they should shout, "Absalom is king in Hebron." In the mean time he left Jerusalem, and invited two hundred leading men to go with him. They of course accompanied him in all innocence, supposing that he was going to Hebron to fulfil his vow. At last Absalom even won over the wise and aged Ahithophel, David's chief counselor, to whom he revealed his conspiracy. Surely *he* should have known better than to betray his king! Certainly Absalom's course seemed to flourish, plenty of people were shouting for him. His success, at the start, at least, showed that many were not satisfied with David; perhaps the taxes were too heavy. Some dissatisfied nobles and even some priests joined the usurper. So fickle is the loyalty of the people! How ready they were to forget their king, who in his younger days had driven off enemies from all their borders and made them a great nation.

Soon David had to be told of his son's treachery. The news pierced like a knife—his beloved Absalom, his favorite! "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child."

David had no choice but flight. There was no safety in Jerusalem. So, with a few servants and a few necessities hastily gotten together, he mournfully

departed from his capital, his own city, "the city of David." Many faithful friends followed him; his brave six hundred who had been with him in all his reverses and his triumphs—they were with him. His body-guard of Cherethites and Pelethites of course followed their master, and also six hundred Gittites, under the leadership of Ittai the Gittite, who had recently come to Jerusalem with his followers, perhaps to enter David's service. David was touched at this kindness of a stranger. "Why go with me, to share my trials and dangers, you, who have only known me a few days? Go, join the popular party, you and your men, and may mercy and truth be with you," said the king in a choking voice. Ittai thereupon answered:

> "As the Lord liveth and as the king liveth, in whatever place my master the king shall be, whether for death or for life, even there also will thy servant be."

Contrast the honor and steadfastness of the stranger with the heartlessness and betrayal of the son! It is in time of trouble that we find out who are our friends.

The flight of David is reported in every detail. Indeed it is said that there is no single day in Jewish history of which so full an account is preserved as the day of David's flight from Absalom. It is not the first time that David had to flee for his life from his own kin; but in the days of Saul he was a young man, with the energy and enthusiasm of youth; he is an old man now.

The first halt was just outside the city, at a place

called the Far-House. Here they arranged their forces. There were few dry eyes as the people watched them cross the brook of Kedron and trudge toward the wilderness of Jericho. The faithful priests, Zadok and Abiathar, with many Levites bearing the ark, came forward also, ready to share in whatever calamities might overtake their king. But David would not permit it:

> "Carry back the ark of God to the city; if I should find favor in the eyes of God, he will bring me back again, and he will show me both it and his habitation, but if he say thus I have no delight in thee . . . . behold, here I am; let him do to me what seemeth to him good."

It was like a mourning procession as they ascended the Mount of Olives, from whose heights Jerusalem could still be seen All were in tears, while, with bowed head and bare feet, the broken-hearted king led the way. How sadly he looked back upon his beautiful capital. As though not enough calamities had overtaken him, he was now told of Ahithophel's desertion. "Oh, may his counsel come to naught." But all is not lost yet, here comes his old favorite, Hushai, wanting to know how best he can help his master. A strategem occurs to David, born of that necessity which is so often the mother of invention. "You go to Absalom and promise to support his cause, and in this way try to overthrow the advice of Ahithophel; keep the priests, Zadok and Abiathar at Jerusalem, informed of Absalom's movements and they will inform me."

Soon Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, was seen with two asses on which there were saddle-bags containing bread, raisins, fruit and wine. "Where is Mephibosheth" asked David. "Oh, he is in Jerusalem, expecting to get back the throne of his grandfather Saul." What base ingratitude, thought David; "All that belongeth to him is now yours," he angrily cried. But Ziba had slandered his lame master. Mephibosheth had *sent* Ziba to David. Do not envy the gains earned by bearing false witness against your neighbor. Alas for him who builds his prosperity on the ruin of another's character!

But David was to meet foes as well as friends on this eventful journey On the opposite ridge of the mount, came one Shimei, a Benjaminite, who, seeing his king helpless and fallen, threw stones at him and called down curses upon his head. "Shall we permit this insolent fellow to insult the king, let me go up and slay him," said Abishai, the brother of Joab. "No," said David, "my own son seeketh my life, why should not this Benjaminite abuse me; let him alone, let him curse, perhaps it is a visitation of God."

Would you defend David's advice to Hushai?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

The old Hebrew law was very severe against the disloyal son—"He that smiteth his father or his mother shall surely be put to

death." "He that curseth his father or his mother shall surely be put to death." (Exod. xxi. 15, 17.)

Look up some texts in Proverbs about the bad son, such as, "A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish (wicked) son is the heaviness of his mother." Prov. x. 1.

Ahithophel was David's confidential adviser and one of the keenest men in Israel; the only reason surmised for his disloyalty is that he was the grandfather of Bathsheba, and that he had never quite forgiven David's conduct toward her and her gallant husband, Uriah the Hittite. To him may well apply the text Ps. xli. 9.

Compare Ittai's words to David with Ruth's words to Naomi.

Read Ps. iii., said to have been composed by David during his flight.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE BITTERNESS OF VICTORY.

BIBLE TEXT: **"He that soweth iniquity shall reap calamity and the rod of his wrath shall fail."**

Proverbs xxii. 8.

What different scenes were passing in Jerusalem! Absalom had marched into the capital in insolent and wicked triumph. With him came Ahithophel, whose advice to the young usurper was as base as Balaam's counsel to Balak. Hushai, David's friend, now came forward to greet Absalom, shouting "God save the king! God save the king!" "What!" said Absalom, half in satire and half in suspicion, "you? why are you not with your friend?" "No," said Hushai, "I

will stand by him whom the people have chosen; as I was faithful to your father, so will I be to you."

Ahithophel advised instant attack. "Slay the king only, while he is weak-handed and weary; then the people with him will flee and will soon be won over to our side." "Very good," said Absalom. "Now let us hear what Hushai says." Hushai knew that such advice would be bad for David, that what David needed now was time for flight and for collecting an army. Therefore, pretending to plead in Absalom's interest, he said: "Oh no! that would be very dangerous; you know what a valiant man your father is and what gallant troops he has attached to him. If he slay even a few of your followers, the report will spread and your cause will be lost. Wait until your army is as great as the grains of sand on the seashore, then you may attack the king without fear." This advice, fortunately for David, was accepted.

Alas for Ahithophel! His wisdom had been esteemed so high throughout the land that his words were regarded as precious as an oracle—a prophecy. No one had ever dared to question his advice. Think, then, what must have been his humiliation to find his plan rejected! He saw, now too late, that Absalom's cause would certainly fail. Full of shame at the impious part he had played against his king, he did what so many unfortunates do when overcome by remorse and despair at their own sins—he committed suicide.

Hushai lost no time in sending word by his trusty priests to David, to stay not a moment longer at the fords of the wilderness, but to cross the Jordan at once. The message was delivered, but not without danger and hazardous adventure. David and his men crossed the river in safety and reached Mahanaim in Gad, where they were kindly received. Here they met new allies, among them Barzillai, a Gileadite chief, who brought them many necessary and useful articles, and plenty of food.

David now arranged his forces in three divisions under Joab, Abishai and Ittai, and prepared them for the coming struggle. The king wished to go with them, but they would not hear of it. They knew that his life would be more eagerly sought than that of ten thousand men. He vielded to their wishes. But as the army marched by him out of the gate—with a father's tenderness which nothing can destroy—he added, as a parting warning to the captains, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man—with Absalom." While Absalom was seeking to kill his father, David was trying to save his son!

The young traitor had also gathered an army with Amasa, David's own nephew, as general, and was now hastening to meet the king's forces. He soon reached Mahanaim; but by this time, David's army had grown large enough to encounter the rebels. The battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim; this was not in the

district of Ephraim, but east of the Jordan, near Mahanaim.

Absalom was completely defeated as he deserved to be; twenty thousand of his men lay dead on the battle-field. The rest took flight in the depths of the forest, where they perished miserably, for the army was placed in so poor a position that retreat was difficult. Thus were the thousands of Israel sacrificed to Absalom's wicked ambition.

This would-be king fled on the back of a mule. His abundant hair caught on the boughs of an overhanging oak, and the mule running off, he was left hanging in mid-air. In this painful and helpless condition he was seen, and the news reported to Joab. "Why did you not slay him? I would have given you ten pieces of silver and a girdle." "Not for a thousand pieces of silver would I disobey the king's commands" Joab was not so scrupulous Seizing three darts, he was off to the forest and thrust them through Absalom. His body was thrown into a ditch; and his only monument was a pillar he had raised in his own honor in his life-time It but served to keep alive his unnatural crimes.

Alas for his vanity, the very hair of which he was so proud really brought him his doom There is a well-known fable of a stag that admired its antlers and despised its legs. When danger came, his thin legs carried him swiftly, but soon his beautiful antlers entangled him in the bushes, while the pursuers

came up and dispatched him. Absalom despised his father, the only one who cared to save his life, while his lovely locks, his chief pride, held him for the darts of Joab.

Joab now blew a trumpet to tell the people to cease fighting; the battle was over. The Israelites fled to their homes.

A lonely figure sat between the two gates watching anxiously for tidings of the battle. The watchman on the wall above, announced that two messengers could be seen on the road. The first entered saying: "All is well." David tremblingly asked: "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" But he preferred not answering that question. "I heard a great noise, but I know not what it was." Then came the next messenger and to the same question answered: "May the enemies of the king be as that young man is." That was enough. David broke down. He went up to the chamber over the gate and cried, sobbing as he walked.

> "Oh, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would to God I had died for thee, Oh, Absalom my son, my son!"

The Rabbins say that each cry of David, "Absalom, my son," brought the lost soul nearer to God. Although this is only a sentiment, it voices a beautiful truth that love can save when no other power can.

Was it not better in the end that Absalom's life was not spared?

NOTES TO TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

How deep is a parent's love, how enduring, how unselfish; no cruelty, no ingratitude can extinguish it. Of all human affections it comes nearest to God's love for his creatures, and it is the link that holds us closest to our Maker.

Read "Absalom," N. P. Willis.

Read Longfellow's "Chamber over the Gate."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

'TWIXT LOVE AND DUTY.

BIBLE TEXT **"Execute true judgment and show mercy and compassion, every man to his brother."**
Zechariah vii. 9.

But the king owed a duty to his people as well as to his feelings as a father. Absalom was his son, but Absalom was a traitor, and it was fortunate for the welfare of the nation that he was dead. For his people's sake David must stifle his grief. The blunt Joab did not hesitate to remind him of his public duty when he learned that the soldiers were afraid to cheer, and that victory was turned into mourning by David's lamentation:

> "Thou art shaming the faces of thy servants, who have this day saved thy life and the lives of thy household, in thus showing love to thy enemies and hatred to thy friends. Go forth and speak words of comfort to thy servants, or, by night not one will be with thee: that would be the worst evil that had ever befallen thee since the days of thy youth."

In the times when telegraph and railways and even postal service were unknown, news traveled slowly indeed. Perhaps the battle was over in one place before the news that it had broken out had reached another, so that gradually the struggle spread like a plague throughout the whole land.

Everybody was glad to learn that the rebellion was at an end; and even some of the rebels were a little ashamed to think that they had taken up arms against their king, who had really ruled them well and who had delivered the country from the Philistines. So that even those who had been against him now vied with each other in showing him attention and manifesting loyalty. All wanted the honor of escorting him back to Jerusalem in triumph. David gave preference to his own tribe, Judah, although many of the rebels had been of that tribe. He even invited Amasa, the general of Absalom's forces, to join him in the return to Jerusalem, and promised he would make him commander-in-chief of the army. He thought that this would perhaps be the quickest way of restoring peace and good-will. But he was very much mistaken, as we shall presently see.

Now that David was once more in power, Shimei the Benjaminite, who had cursed him in his fall, hastened to the king with cringing and flattery, begging forgiveness and offering assistance. Such is the way of worldlings and cowards. But when Abishai advised that he should be put to death, David replied:

"No! no man shall be put to death this day in Israel." Do you recall a similar occasion, in David's early days, when he spared an enemy who came into his power? Next entered Mephibosheth, who had entirely neglected all care of himself since the day the king had taken flight. When David reproached him for his desertion, he learnt that Ziba had deceived and slandered his master. So his lands were once more restored, but Ziba was to keep half, after all.

The aged Barzillai, who had shown himself so loyal in the king's misfortune, left his home now joyfully to greet him. He accompanied David over the Jordan, which was crossed by a bridge of boats. He declined the king's invitation to live in Jerusalem for the future, and to be fed at the royal table: "No! my lord, I am eighty years old, I have passed the age of enjoyment of all worldly pleasures. I ask no reward. Let me return and die in my own village by the grave of my father and my mother. Here is my son Chimham, let him go with you." David kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and so he passes out of our sight, but not out of our memory. Although you hear of him only at the end of his life, do you not feel sure from this one incident that those eighty years behind him were full of earnest, honest, faithful work?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Through the favor shown by David to Chimham, the son of Barzillai, it became an important family in later days.

We are not quite satisfied that the false Ziba should have received half Mephibosheth's lands; many think, therefore, that there may have been some truth in his charge, after all.

A parent loves his child, however sinful his life may be; but a king owes a duty to his subjects to condemn a sinner, though it be his own son. Compare this struggle 'twixt love and duty to Aaron's great silence (Vol. I, p. 163), Leviticus x.; also Saul's condemnation of Jonathan.

CHAPTER XLIX.

PUT NOT YOUR TRUST IN NUMBERS.

BIBLE TEXT: **"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be thou weary of his reproof; for whom the Lord loveth he reproveth, even as a father the child in whom he delighteth."**

Proverbs iii. 11.

David's favoritism to the men of Judah in choosing them to conduct him over the Jordan back to the capital again, led to jealousy and trouble. Sheba, a Benjaminite, a worthless fellow, hearing the hot words that passed between the ten tribes of Israel and the one tribe of Judah, blew the trumpet of war once more, and shouted:

> "We have no portion in David, neither have we any inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel."

At this call many of the king's followers deserted to rebel again.

David now asked his new general, Amasa, to collect an army and pursue Sheba. But this appointment of Amasa was a great mistake, for few cared to follow the man who had just been leading the rebel forces. So David had to turn to his old general, Joab, whom he never really liked and always mistrusted. Jealous of Amasa, the brutal Joab slew him, as he had slain Abner many years before, under almost exactly the same circumstances. He then coolly joined both forces and continued the pursuit of Sheba through all the tribes of Israel. Sheba took refuge in Abel-Beth-Maachah, a city up north in Naphtali, noted for its wisdom and loyalty. Another battle might have followed, had it not been for the prudence of a wise woman, who, standing on the walls of the city, induced both sides to be content with the death of one rebel, Sheba, who had really started the second uprising. Sheba was therefore beheaded and peace restored at last. How often a wise word in season prevents bitterness, strife and even bloodshed.

The rebellion was now completely stamped out. But the dreadful experience of this civil war, in which a son had taken up arms against his own father, was not without its chastening influence on David. If it saddened him, it also purified him. Such is the silver lining of suffering. There is wise purpose behind all pain. God's blessings sometimes come to us in the disguise of calamity.

One of the later incidents of David's reign is his numbering of the people. That is, it is mentioned after Absalom's rebellion, though it may have occurred before. We do not know why this census—as it is called—was taken. Perhaps for taxation in order to increase the luxuries of the court; perhaps for the purpose of raising a larger army to extend his conquests. We *do* know that there was a popular prejudice against it, probably for the reasons just named. For these reasons, also, it would awaken the disapproval of the prophets, who were always opposed to pomp and splendor and worldly aims But then, again, there was a religious objection to *counting* in itself. Possibly because counting one's means and resources and relying too much upon them, might imply lack of trust in God.

Joab and the other officers appointed to number the people traversed the country, beginning east of the Jordan and going from Dan in the north to Beer Sheba in the south. In each place the men capable of bearing arms were assembled and their numbers taken down. The census took altogether ten months, and we are told, in one of the accounts, that there were 800,000 valiant men that drew the sword, and 500,000 in Judah alone. This would make the whole population, including women and children, about four millions; but there were probably much fewer.

Soon after this, a plague broke out and the superstitious people at once supposed that counting the

people had caused it. If the plague was due to the census at all, then it was simply the consequence of crowding together so many people in one place, which you know sometimes leads to the spread of disease. But the masses supposed that there was something wicked in the counting of the people, and that the pestilence was sent by God as punishment. We do not think so now.

What is the mission of suffering?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

When David was in danger and flight, few were willing to cross the Jordan with him; when about to return in safety and honor, they quarreled for the privilege of accompanying him.

The word "chasten" contains a lesson in itself. "Chaste" means "white," "pure." Some things have to be scoured to be purified and some have to be passed through the fire. We mortals must often be scourged and passed through the furnace of affliction, before that which is unworthy (like the dross) passes away, and we can emerge purified. God's punishments are purifications—chastenings.

Notice that so many rebels came from the tribe of Benjamin, Sheba, Shimei, etc. They were never reconciled to the fact of the House of Saul being deposed and the king chosen from another tribe.

Read Ps. xviii., ascribed to David; also prayer, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1-7

CHAPTER L.

WHAT WE THINK OF DAVID.

BIBLE TEXT: **"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful."** *Psalm cxvi. 15.*

We have now very nearly reached the end of David's life At the opening of the First Book of Kings he is a very old man, his health is failing. It is time to think of his successor. Adonijah was the eldest son, but Solomon was David's choice. Adonijah began to make preparations for his coronation and surrounded himself with horsemen and chariots, as Absalom had done, though his father had always been kind to him. You will be surprised to learn that both Joab and the priest Abiathar supported his claim. There was great rejoicing, and the people shouted "God save King Adonijah!"

When David heard of this uprising, he immediately issued orders from his sick-bed that Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, should publicly crown Solomon king during his father's lifetime. The royal decree was carried out and the priest anointed Solomon. *Now* the people shouted "Long live King Solomon!" The people are always ready to shout for the latest comer. When this news reached Adonijah, his guests and supporters fled in terror. Such was the end of his hopes for the throne.

David now felt his death at hand, and, calling his son Solomon to his bedside, he gave him his last

words of advice. He bade him punish his father's enemies and reward his father's friends.

> "I go the way of all the earth, therefore be thou strong and show thyself a man. Keep the charge of the Lord God, to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments, that thou mayest prosper in all thou doest and whithersoever thou turnest."

Thus passed away Israel's greatest king. By destroying the power of the Philistines and conquering the Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites, he extended the borders of the nation almost from the Euphrates to Egypt. He not only secured the internal prosperity of the land of Israel, he also made it a great empire. But the *material* strength of a nation often leads to its *moral* advance. So the safety that David assured to his people prepared the way for those great religious ideas that Israel was to give the world.

For David was very much more than a brilliant general, whose campaigns enlarged his nation's boundaries and strengthened the union of his people. There were many sides to his character. He was a deeply religious man. He would not rest until he had brought the ark to Jerusalem, and then, such was his joy that, regardless of his royal dignity, he "danced before the Lord." He was anxious to build the Temple and did collect much material and treasure for this work. Such was his deep religious trust, that in every misfortune and every good he sought the hand of God; his faith alone nerved him to meet the Philistine giant. Even the

writing of the Psalms is ascribed to him; and while we are satisfied to-day that he wrote very few of them he certainly gave every encouragement to the cultivation of religious music and was a poet, too. The rebuke of the prophets he always received in meekness and contrition. Sincere penitence marks the presence of many noble traits

Although the religious standard of his age was of course not as high as ours, although people were fiercer and more cruel, and their idea of God not very high—there were great moments in David's life, when he seemed to rise above his surroundings. We can never forget his chivalry to his men, his sparing of Saul's life, his fidelity to his nation even when hunted to death by its king, his grief at the death of some of his worst enemies—Saul, Abner, Absalom, Amasa. His name, "David," means "beloved," and he was indeed the darling of his people.

But there were grave blemishes in David's character. His sin against Uriah can never be overlooked. His impulses were not always good, and in emergencies he was not always truthful. In the bringing up of his children, we feel that his weakness and indulgence had much to do with the troubles that saddened his later years

But in after times his defects were forgotten by the side of his excellencies his keen insight, his generosity, his skill. his splendid faculties, his bravery, his faith. When sadder times came to Israel, when

the nation was split in two, when rising powers threatened their existence and impo ed heavy burdens upon them, they looked back longingly to the glorious days of King David. Compared with their misery, it seemed like a *golden age*. Oh, for a David to rise and deliver them from their oppressors! Thus the longing for the restoration of David's throne grew into a hope, and after they had lost land and freedom, the hope deepened into a conviction. Surely, God would raise up a scion from the House of David, who would change Israel's shame into glory, rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and establish his throne once more? In this way there grew up many centuries later a belief in the coming of an ideal king like David—God's own anointed. And you have already been told that the Hebrew of "Anointed" is Mashi-ach (MESSIAH).

You will learn later what an important part that hope was to play in the world.

What quality of David do you most admire?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

In spite of the dishonor and disaster that followed Absalom's attempt to seize the throne, Adonijah makes the same attempt, though it is fortunately put down without bloodshed. Some people never learn from the sad mistakes of others.

The worth of David is best understood by comparing him with his times and his surroundings.

Give the boundaries of Saul's kingdom, of David's.

Read Isaiah xi.

CHAPTER LI.

SOLOMON.

(About 980 B. C. E.)

Bible Text: "Take fast hold of wisdom, let her not go, keep her, for she is thy life." *Proverbs iv.* 13.

It was a splendid kingdom that David bequeathed to his son Solomon—a kingdom that was worthy to take its place among the great nations of the world at that time. But, to make his throne secure, Solomon had to begin his reign by putting down insurrection. Adonijah made another move, that showed he still conspired against the throne. He was, therefore, put to death. Joab, who aided Adonijah in his conspiracy, suffered the same penalty. He had fled to the Sanctuary and had caught hold of the horns of the altar, hoping that the sacred place would give him protection; but at the very altar he was slain. The Sanctuary was a recognized protection for the innocent—not for the guilty. Joab, who had brutally slain so many, had now in his old age, to die by the sword himself. He was a brave soldier, he had made some important conquests for Israel, he had been faithful to David. But the base murder of Abner and of Amasa and his treachery against Solomon compel us to condemn him. Abiathar the priest, who was also one of the conspirators, was stripped of his priestly robes and banished to his estates. His holy office saved his life. Shimei, whose past record made it

impossible for him to be trusted out of the sight of the king, was commanded to live in Jerusalem, where his movements could be watched, and not to leave under penalty of death. He kept the promise for three years, and then broke it and suffered the penalty. Solomon's throne was now secure.

One night Solomon dreamt that God came to him as he had appeared to the patriarchs of old, and asked what he wanted most. Solomon answered :

> "I am only a lad, I know not how to go out or to come in, yet am I in the midst of a great people that cannot be counted for multitude; give thy servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge the people, that I may discern between good and evil." God said unto him, "Because thou hast asked this thing and hast not asked for thyself long life, or riches, but only for understanding to discern judgment, behold, I have done according to thy word. I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked—wealth and honor." Solomon awoke and, behold, it was but a dream.

Very early in his reign, Solomon earned the title of "wise." It happened in this way : Two women appeared before him with a living and a dead child, each claiming the living as her own. How was he to find out the truth ? "Fetch me a sword," he commanded, "and divide the living child in two and give half to the one and half to the other." "Oh, my lord," cried the woman whose child it really was, for her heart yearned towards it, "give her the living child and in no wise slay it." "No," said the other,

"it shall be neither mine nor thine, divide it." Then, pointing to the first speaker, the king said: "Give her the living child and in no wise slay it, she is its mother." All Israel heard of the famous act of discernment; and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom of God was with him.

He was also renowned for his proverbs, songs and common-sense maxims for daily life, in which he drew comparisons from nature—from the properties of plants and trees, from the cedar to the vine, and from the habits of beasts, reptiles and fishes. One who studies plant and animal life we call a "naturalist." Some of Solomon's sayings are found in the "Book of Proverbs," a collection of wise maxims of many Hebrew sages (see Appendix). We may say that Solomon was a patron of poetry and fine arts, of letters and philosophy. He was also clever at riddles and at answering hard questions Many people came from a distance to hear his wisdom and to see his magnificence, bringing presents with them. The Queen of Sheba—in Arabia Felix, on the coast of the Red Sea—wishing to test Solomon's knowledge, traveled to Jerusalem in great state, with camels bearing spices, gold and precious stones, as a present to the king. She put some knotty questions to him, but he answered them all. Then he showed her his treasures and his wealth. She was lost in admiration:

> "Thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy servants, who stand continually

before thee to hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God who delighteth in thee to set thee on the throne of Israel."

Wealth seemed to flow to him from every side. He married the daughter of the king of Egypt, and she brought him the Canaanite city, Gezer, on the border of Ephraim, as a dowry. Probably the taxes of the city were given her for her own use, according to the popular custom. Solomon made it one of the fortresses for the defense of the country. It had been the last of the Canaanite cities in Israel's territory to retain its independence until taken by the king of Egypt. Many of the Canaanites had become part of the Israelitish people by intermarriage with them. The rest were now so completely subdued that they occupied a very low position in Israel. Solomon made use of them to build store cities for goods and grain. They also built for him a chain of fortresses, the chief of which were Beth-Horon and Baalath in the north, and Tadmor in the south, which was a calling-place for the caravans. They also may have built the aqueducts that supplied Jerusalem with water.

In addition to the Egyptian princess, Solomon had many other wives, and many concubines—*i. e.*, wives of the second rank. Some of them had separate houses of their own. So the maintenance of the king's household was on a tremendous scale. Each month a different tribe had the expense of supporting it. The provisions for one day were thirty measures of fine

flour, sixty measures of meal, thirty oxen, a hundred sheep, besides harts, gazelles, roebucks and fatted fowl; and all the utensils were of gold. He had four thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. How dazzling was the splendor of Solomon's glory at the opening of his reign!

What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

Solomon's dream: Many young people start out in life with noble ideals, but they do not always live up to them. We shall see how far Solomon was true to the visions of his youth.

God offers to each of us the choice of many things. Some choose a life of idleness and pleasure, some a life of usefulness and good. God has given us faculties and powers which we may use to the noblest ends. Try to be satisfied with nothing less than the highest. Solomon was wise, because he *wished* to be, and persevered in his efforts to acquire knowledge. Remember the story of the "Choice of Hercules."

The sanctuary as a protection: "If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbor to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him even from mine altar that he may die."—Exodus xxi. 14.

The judgment of Solomon: A father dies; two claimants appear for his estate. The judge decides to award the property to the best marksman, the target to be the father's picture. The impostor shoots, the true son declines to mar the likeness of his father, and the judge in this way recognizes him as the rightful heir.

Gezer. See Historical Geography of Palestine, p. 216; also Joshua x. 33, xvi. 3-10.

Read "Azrael" (Longfellow) and "Queen of the South" (Plumtre), Readings and Recitations

CHAPTER LII.

THE TEMPLE.

BIBLE TEXT: **"The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what manner of house can ye build unto me, and what place shall be my rest."**
Isaiah lxvi. 1.

Solomon's fame rests chiefly on the building of the Temple The people wanted a handsome shrine in keeping with their growing kingdom. He sent to Tyre for workmen, as did his father before him. Hiram was still king. This was Solomon's message:

> "Thou knowest that David, my father, could not build a house of God, because of the wars which were about him. But now God hath given me rest on every side. There is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. Behold, then, I purpose to build a house to God. Therefore, give orders to have hewn for me cedar trees of Lebanon, and my servants shall be with thy servants, and I will give thee hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint. For thou knowest that there is not among us any skilled to hew timber like the Zidonians." When Hiram heard Solomon's words he rejoiced greatly and said, "Blessed be the Lord who hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. I will do all thou desirest concerning cedar and cypress. My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon to the sea. I will make them into rafts so that they may go by sea to the place that thou appointest."

Along the even Mediterranean coast it was comparatively easy to float down these rafts as far as Joppa; here, with much more labor, they were taken inland to

Jerusalem. In return for timber, Solomon gave Hiram yearly 20,000 measures of wheat and 20 measures of pure oil. In fact, Tyre always sent to Palestine for its grain.

Many thousand men were collected by Solomon for the great work. Some to assist the Phœnicians in cutting timber in the mountains and to quarry stone for the foundations, others to do the carrying. Adoniram had full charge of the workmen with many officers under him. So the great work of building a temple on Mount Moriah, at the summit of Zion, was begun.

It took seven years to complete the structure. All the stones were prepared at the quarry, so that there was no hammer or axe heard in the Temple while it was building. Chambers, reached by winding staircases, were built around the central hall or temple proper, which reminds us somewhat of buildings of the present day. Some of these rooms were used by the priests and some as workshops in preparing materials and food for temple use. One portion of the Temple was shut off as a separate room by handsome folding-doors, and was called "The Holy of Holies," the larger hall being called the Sanctuary. In the Holy of Holies was placed the ark, which was ornamented with two gilded cherubim (figures of angels) with outstretched wings. The ark contained nothing but two stone tablets, on which the Commandments were engraved. Two lofty and beautifully carved pillars,

looking somewhat like obelisks, stood at the portico of the Temple. The one was called Jachin, which means "He shall establish," and the other Boaz, "In it is strength."

Compared with some of our modern houses of worship, the Temple was small. For it was not intended to hold large gatherings of people—they stood in the front court yard. It was about ninety feet long, thirty feet broad and forty-five feet high. It was about double the size of the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

Adjoining the Temple was a "brazen sea." It held nearly nine hundred gallons of water, and was supported by twelve oxen made of brass. In addition to this were ten brass pedestals, also richly ornamented, upon which lavers rested, containing smaller quantities of water. Then there were bowls, shovels and basins. Some of the vessels were of pure gold, particularly the table of shew-bread, the candlesticks, lamps, cups, snuffers, spoons, firepans and censers; censers were vessels in which incense was burnt, giving forth a pleasant perfume. What a magnificent structure, what elaborate and costly decoration! Does it not seem a little too gorgeous for a House of God? It did not quite win the approval of the prophet party, with their ideas of stern simplicity. In fact, it was built somewhat after the style of heathen shrines.

When all was ready and the vessels which his father, David, had put aside for this purpose were placed in the treasuries of the Temple, Solomon

assembled the elders of Israel, the heads of the tribes and the princes, to bring up the ark from Zion. All the people were assembled and many sacrifices were offered. A dedication festival was held for seven days in addition to the seven days' celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

A beautiful prayer has been written to commemorate the dedication of the Temple. Here are some passages:

"O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like thee in heaven above or on earth beneath who keepeth covenant and mercy with thy servants, who walk before thee with all their heart. But will God in very deed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house that I have built. Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, O Lord, my God, which he prayeth before thee this day, that thy eyes may be open to this house where thou hast said 'My name shall be there.' Hearken thou to the supplication of thy people Israel, which they shall pray toward this place Hear thou, in heaven, thy dwelling place, and when thou hearest—forgive.

"If a man sin against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear before thine altar in this house, oh, hear thou and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked and justifying the righteous.

"Whatever prayer be made, by any man, knowing the plague of his own heart, oh, hear thou and forgive and render unto every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest (for thou alone knowest the hearts of all mankind), that they may ever reverence thee.

"Moreover, concerning the stranger that is not of thy people Israel, when he, hearing of thy power, shall come out of a far country for thy name's sake and pray toward this house, oh hear thou and do according to all the stranger

asketh; that all nations may fear thee as do thy people Israel; that they may know that thy name is called upon this house, which I have built."

"May God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he not leave nor forsake us; may he incline our hearts to him to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments. That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God: there is none else."

The Temple became a central place of worship for all Israel. On the Great Festivals the people would come from long distances to bring their offerings to Jerusalem. It won the admiration of other nations, and many a stranger came to Solomon's Temple to worship the God of Israel.

Where did the people worship before the Temple was built?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

There was no decoration of the shape of a human figure in the Temple, it was and is against Jewish usage; the ornamentation consisted of figures of animals, groups of flowers and fancy forms.

The Temple certainly added to the dignity of the people and nation. It furthered religious organization and created a religious centre. Perhaps the pilgrimages to Jerusalem at the Three Festivals commenced from this time.

Notice the reference to the "Stranger" in the Dedication Prayer. How largely his interests are considered all through the Bible!

"Pray *towards* this place." We still turn towards in prayer the East, where the Temple once stood.

The text at the head of this Chapter teaches the omnipresence of God; find others like it—read Ps. cxxxix.

Read Vol. I., Chap. xxxiv.

Read "King Solomon the Wise," Polano's Talmud, p. 192.

CHAPTER LIII.

SOLOMON'S GLORY.

BIBLE TEXT: **"By thy great wisdom and by thy great traffic hast thou increased wealth."** *Ezekiel xxviii. 5.*

Solomon's next undertaking was the construction of a palace, which took thirteen years to build. It was connected with the Temple by a bridge. A magnificent porch of pillars adjoined it. The foundations were of solid, costly stone. In this "house of cedar" were suspended 200 shields, each gilt with 600 shekels of gold; it also contained 300 smaller gilt shields for his body-guard. So it was an armory as well All David's shields, spears and swords were preserved in the Temple as sacred relics of that great hero. Solomon's throne was of ivory, inlaid with fine gold; the seat was approached by six steps, on each of which were two carved lions. He also built a palace for the Egyptian princess, and imitated in every way the extravagance of Tyre and Egypt. Of course the nobles followed his example in building palaces of cedar. In return for the cedar, fir and gold, Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in Galilee. Hiram was so disappointed in this gift that he contemptuously called it "Cabul," *i. e.*, "as nothing;" you will find it close by Mount Carmel.

How different was all this wealth and splendor of Solomon from the small possessions and rough comforts of Israel's first king Saul. In his day the Hebrews

had neither horses nor chariots and yet they had made their way without them.

Israel was now prepared to trade with distant countries. Solomon built a navy at Ezion-geber; this was far in the south, below Edom, at the head of a gulf opening into the Red Sea. He manned it with seamen from Tyre; the Phœnicians were all experienced sailors. They sailed as far as Ophir, which was probably a general name for India, and obtained a large quantity of gold: 666 talents came into the king's treasury every year. This would make Solomon perhaps the richest king in the East No wonder he could make targets, shields and drinking cups of gold! "Silver was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon, he made it to be as stones in Jerusalem." The ships also brought from Ophir precious stones, and almug trees from Malabar in India. Almug was probably sandal wood, and Solomon used it for making pillars for the Temple and harps for the musicians He also had "ships of Tarshish," so called because they were fitted for long journeys and usually sailed as far as Tartessus, south of Spain, where they obtained silver. These Tarshish ships brought back, among other thing, apes and peacocks, and from Africa they brought ivory, and from Arabia, spices. Each trip generally lasted three years. Sometimes the Phœnician merchants sailed beyond the "Pillars of Hercules"—as the ancients called the Straits of Gibraltar—to Cadiz (Portugal), which they actually

built—to France and even to the British Isles. Solomon did quite a trade, too, in horses from Egypt selling them to the Hittites and the Syrians. Then extensive trade was carried on by caravans on an overland route. "The king's high road"—from Jerusalem to the north—was especially laid out for trade travel. All its heights were leveled and its depths filled in to make it smooth and even. On this road, and on another from the south, trains of camels would often be seen bringing varied products to Jerusalem.

Of course this contact with different nations, and the strange experience and new conveniences and luxuries that this extensive commerce brought to Israel, broadened their outlook and gave them knowledge of many things in the great world around them.

But Solomon's luxury and splendor could not be kept up without heavy taxation. So, although we are told that "every man sat under his own vine and his own fig tree," we are also told that Solomon "made their yoke heavy." Occasional expressions of discontent broke from the people that told of trouble to come.

Should Solomon have taken longer to build his own palace than to build the Temple?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

In this reign, Israel excelled in a new direction—trade. When the sword is laid aside the arts of peace flourish. Nations, alas, have always begun by fighting and hating each other. Not till much later do they learn to be kindly and to have dealings in

which both may prosper. So commerce between nations only flourishes after their people have become fairly civilized.

The ships of Tarshish went to sea every three years at the time of the *monsoon*, navigation being then easy because the wind would be with them.

Some think Ophir may have been Arabia; that was certainly nearer to Ezion-geber.

Perhaps Hiram was disappointed in Cabul because it was not on the sea, and the maritime Phœnicians valued coast land most.

There were 3000 gold shekels in a talent; since a gold shekel was about £2, this would make a talent £6,000 ($30,000).

Some one suggests that Israel may have exported its famous "balm of Gilead"—a medicine.

Read "Hours with the Bible," vol. 3, chap. xiv., for an interesting description of Phœnician civilization in the time of Solomon. (In the Bible, Zidonian is a general term for Phœnician.)

Solomon marries an Egyptian princess and trades with Egypt. This sounds very different from the old enmity existing between Israel and Egypt in the days of Moses. Yet we shall, later, see that Egypt as a friend was more dangerous than Egypt as an enemy.

Read "Pools of Solomon," Readings and Recitations, p. 103.

Read "Wooing of the Princess" and "Faust of the Talmud"—Stories from the Rabbis, by A. S. Isaacs (Webster, N. Y.).

COMPANY OF EGYPTIAN ARCHERS.

CHAPTER LIV.

BREAKERS AHEAD.

BIBLE TEXT: **"When thou hast built goodly houses and dwelt therein, and when thy herds, thy flocks, thy silver and thy gold and all that thou hast, be multiplied—beware lest thy heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God."** *Deuteronomy viii.* 12-14.

I have said that Solomon had a peaceful reign – but at its commencement there were some outbreaks. At the death of the valiant David and the warlike Joab, some of the old enemies took heart again When David conquered Idom, a few Edomites took young Hadad of the royal house, and fled with him to Egypt. Here he was kindly received, and later married to a sister-in-law of the king. Hearing that David "slept with his fathers" and that Joab was dead, he thought that he would venture back to his own country. This he did, and succeeded in maintaining his independence against Solomon. From time to time, his troops injured Solomon's caravans.

The second disturbance came from another direction. Rezon, a Syrian prince, gathered a troop of men, whom David had driven away in his conquests, and seized Damascus. This became the centre and capital of a new Syrian kingdom. This kingdom was to be a thorn in Israel's side, but not till some time after the death of Solomon.

Solomon showed himself very weak in permitting these outbreaks, which he could have so easily quelled.

But a graver disturbance was brewing that was to endanger the stability of the nation and forever change its destiny. The indolence of the king increased with age. He lacked entirely the warlike spirit of Saul and the ceaseless energy of David. In the company of his heathen wives, he forgot this people and he also forgot—his God. He began by building shrines for the idols of his wives; he ended by worshiping them himself. He heeded not the warning words of the prophet of his day, named Ahijah. What a fall for the wise Solomon, whose reign opened so gloriously!

So, while Solomon was living in ignoble luxury, the people were complaining under the burden of taxation, imposed to maintain the royal state, nor did they submit with patience to the enforced labor needed for the laying out of parks and gardens and the building of fortresses and aqueducts. Let us not forget that the union between north and south had never been very close, and that there always was a jealousy existing between Judah and the Israelite tribes of the north that any discontent was sure to fan into a flame. You will recall the two years' war between Judah and the other tribes, when David was appointed king, and also the revolt of the Ten Tribes of Israel that Sheba started, after the death of Absalom. It was about to break out again, and this time the rupture was to be final.

At last JEROBOAM the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite, conspired against the throne. He had been given

an important post by Solomon to superintend the building of "The Millo"—fortifications of the citadel of Zion, which David had left unfinished. For Solomon largely extended the capital and beautified it. The Jerusalem of David was very small. Jeroboam was a "man of valor," and, seeing his industry, the king put him in charge of most of this public building. This post gave him an opportunity of hearing the Ephraimites express their discontent against the reigning king. This fired his ambition, and he persuaded them to revolt. Jeroboam placed himself at the head of the Ten Tribes of Israel, but the people hesitated to make war against their king, and so the rebellion came to nothing. Solomon sent his guards to slay Jeroboam, but he fled to Shishak, king of Egypt. Here he was received as cordially as Hadad had been. Shishak was glad of any opportunity to encourage rebellion against Solomon. He was afraid lest his Israelitish rival might grow too powerful. But for a time all was quiet and apparently the opposition ended – but only for a time.

Solomon died, but he did not leave to his son as secure a throne as he had inherited. Jerusalem has been made a splendid city, commerce is growing Israel is a great nation, one of the greatest at the time The sunshine of prosperity is upon it, but "a cloud no bigger than a man's hand" can be seen in the distance Jeroboam is in Egypt. He is about to return, and then Israel and Judah will become two nations

And, strong though they were in their union, divided we shall see them fall.

Where lies the greatest strength of a nation?

NOTES FOR TEACHERS AND ADVANCED PUPILS.

In his youth Solomon prayed not for riches, but for wisdom to judge his people. In his later years, he thought much of wealth, but of his people, not at all. Here we see the decline of a man! He was spoilt by too much prosperity. Sahara is a desert because it has too much sunshine. Jacob gives us a contrary picture. He began badly in his youth, but the storms and struggles of life improved him as the years rolled on.

Saul also began his reign well and failed in the end, yet from what different causes.

Would Solomon's kingdom have satisfied the hopes of Samuel?

Read "The Youthful Solomon," "The Aged Solomon." Readings and Recitations, p. 110.

POOL OF BEER-SHEBA.

APPENDIX.

SELECTIONS FROM SCRIPTURE

To be studied in conjunction with this Volume.

PSALMS.

PSALM I.—THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
And in his law doth he meditate day and night,
He shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also doth not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
The wicked are not so;
But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous:
But the way of the wicked shall perish.

PSALM VIII.—GOD AND MAN.

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!
Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens.
Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength,
Because of thine enemies,
That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?

And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him a little lower than God,
And hast crowned him with glory and honour.
Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field;
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the path of the seas.
O Lord our Lord,
How excellent *is* thy name in all the earth!

PSALM XV.—THE UPRIGHT MAN.

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?
He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh truth in his heart.
He that slandereth not with his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his fellow,
Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor.
In whose eyes a reprobate is despised;
But he honoureth them that fear the Lord.
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.
He that putteth not out his money to usury,
Nor taketh reward against the innocent.
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

PSALM XIX.—GOD IN NATURE AND LAW.

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmanent sheweth his handiwork.
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night sheweth knowledge.
There is no speech nor language;
Their voice can not be heard.
Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.
His going forth is from the end of the heavens,
And his circuit unto the ends of it.

And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul:

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold:

Sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.

Moreover, by them is thy servant warned:

In keeping of them there is great reward.

Who can discern his errors?

Cleanse thou me from hidden faults.

Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins,

Let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be perfect,

And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight,

O Lord, my rock, and my redeemer.

PSALM XXIII.—TRUST.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul;

He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil: for thou art with me:

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

PSALM XXXVII. (ABRIDGED)—FAITH.

Fret not yourself because of evil-doers,
Neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.
Trust in the Lord and do good;
So shalt thou dwell in the land; and verily thou shalt be fed.
Delight thyself also in the Lord;
And he shall give thee the desires of thy heart.
Commit thy way unto the Lord;
Trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.
And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light,
And thy judgment as the noon-day.
Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him.
Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way,
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.
Cease from anger, and forsake wrath:
Fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil-doing,
For evil-doers shall be cut off.
But the meek shall inherit the earth;
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.
A little that a righteous man hath
Is better than the riches of many wicked.
The Lord knoweth the days of the upright;
And their inheritance shall be for ever.
The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again;
But the righteous dealeth graciously and giveth.
The steps of a good man are guided by the Lord:
And he delighteth in his way.
Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down:
For the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.
Depart from evil, and do good;
And live for evermore.
For the Lord loveth judgment,
And forsaketh not his saints;
They are preserved for ever.
The righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell therein for ever.
The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,
And his tongue talketh of judgment.
The law of his God is in his heart;

None of his steps shall slide.
Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright;
For the end of that man is peace.

But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord:
He is their strength in the time of trouble.

PSALM XC. (ABRIDGED)—ETERNITY OF GOD.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place
In all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.
Thou turnest man to dust;
And sayest, Return, ye children of men.
For a thousand years in thy sight
Are but as yesterday when it is past,
And as a watch in the night.
Thou carriest them away as a flood;
They are as a sleep;
In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.
In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up;
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
For we are consumed by thine anger.
And by thy wrath are we troubled.
Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.
We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told,
The days of our years are threescore years and ten;
And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years
Yet is their pride but labor and sorrow;
For it is soon gone, and we fly away.
So teach us to number our days,
That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
O satisfy us early with thy mercy;
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil.
Let thy work appear unto thy servants.

And thy glory upon their children.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us:

And establish thou the work of our hands upon us;

Yea, establish thou the work of our hands.

PSALM XCVI.—WORSHIP.

O sing unto the Lord a new song:

Sing unto the Lord, all the earth,

Sing unto the Lord, bless his name;

Shew forth his salvation from day to day.

Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people.

For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised:

He is to be feared above all gods.

For all the gods of the nations are idols:

But the Lord made the heavens.

Honor and majesty are before him;

Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people,

Give unto the Lord glory and strength.

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name:

Bring an offering, and come into his courts.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness:

Tremble before him, all the earth,

Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth:

The world also is established that it can not be moved:

He shall judge the people with equity.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.

Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein:

Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice.

Before the Lord: For he cometh;—

For he cometh to judge the earth:

He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

PSALM CIII.—THE WAYS OF GOD.

Bless the Lord, O my soul:
And all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;
Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things;
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.
The Lord executeth righteousness
And judgment for all that are oppressed.
He made known his ways unto Moses,
His acts unto the children of Israel.
The Lord is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.
He will not always chide:
Neither will he keep his anger for ever.
He hath not dealt with us after our sins;
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
For as the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.
Like as a father pitieth his children,
So the Lord pitieth them that fear him.
For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.
As for man, his days are as grass:
As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone:
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him,
And his righteousness unto children's children;
To such as keep his covenant,
And to those that remember his commandments to do them.
The Lord hath established his throne in the heavens:

And his kingdom ruleth over all.

Bless the Lord, ye his angels,
That excel in strength, that do his commandments,
Hearkening unto the voice of his word.

Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts;
Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
Bless the Lord, all his works
In all places of his dominion:
Bless the Lord, O my soul.

PSALM CIV. (ABRIDGED)—PROVIDENCE.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God, thou art very great;
Thou art clothed with honor and majesty:
Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment:
Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:
Who laid the foundations of the earth,
That it should not be removed for ever.
He sendeth forth the springs into the valleys,
Which run among the hills.
They give drink to every beast of the field:
The wild asses quench their thirst.
By them the fowls of the heaven have their habitation,
Which sing among the branches.
He watereth the hills from his high places:
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
And herb for the service of man:
That he may bring forth food out of the earth:
And wine that maketh glad the heart of man,
And oil to make his face to shine,
And bread which strengtheneth man's heart.
Thou makest darkness, and it is night:
Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.
The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their meat from God.
The sun ariseth, they get them away,
And lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth to his work
And to his labor until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works!
In wisdom hast thou made them all:
The earth is full of thy riches.
These wait all upon thee;
That thou mayest give them their meat in due season.
That thou givest them, they gather;
Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good.
Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled:
Thou takest away their breath, they die,
And return to their dust.
Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created:
And thou renewest the face of the earth.
The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever;
The Lord shall rejoice in his works.
I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live:
I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being.
My meditation of him shall be sweet:
I will be glad in the Lord.
Bless thou the Lord, O my soul
Praise ye the Lord.

PSALM CXXI.—DIVINE PROTECTION.

(Compare Ps. c. and xcv.)

I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains;
From whence shall my help come?
My help cometh from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is thy keeper:
The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:
He shall preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth, and even for evermore.

PSALM CXXXIX. (ABRIDGED)—THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me.

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising;

Thou understandest my thought afar off.

Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,

And art acquainted with all my ways.

For there is not a word in my tongue,

But lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.

Thou hast beset me behind and before,

And laid thine hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;

It is high, I cannot attain unto it.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit?

Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:

If I make my bed in the grave, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning,

And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me,

And thy right hand shal hold me.

If I say, surely the darkness shall overwhelm me;

Even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee;

But the night shineth as the day;

The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

I will give thanks unto thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

Marvellous are thy works,

And that my soul knoweth right well.

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!

How great is the sum of them.

If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand:

When I awake I am still with thee.

Search me, O God, and know my heart:

Try me, and know my thoughts:

And see if there be any wicked way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.

PSALM CXLVIII.—UNIVERSAL PRAISES.

Praise ye the Lord.
Praise ye the Lord from the heavens:
Praise him in the heights.
Praise ye him, all his angels:
Praise ye him, all his hosts.
Praise ye him, sun and moon:
Praise him, all ye stars of light.
Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,
And ye waters that be above the heavens.
Let them praise the name of the Lord:
For he commanded, and they were created.
He hath also established them for ever and ever:
He hath made a decree which shall not pass away.
Praise the Lord from the earth,
Ye dragons, and all deeps:
Fire, and hail; snow, and vapor;
Stormy wind fulfilling his word:
Mountains, and all hills;
Fruitful trees, and all cedars:
Beasts, and all cattle;
Creeping things, and flying fowl:
Kings of the earth, and all people;
Princes, and all judges of the earth:
Both young men, and maidens;
Old men, and children:
Let them praise the name of the Lord:
For his name alone is exalted.
His glory is above the earth and heaven.

PROVERBS.

FROM CHAPTER III.—OBEDIENCE AND WISDOM.

(Compare chaps. i., iv. and viii.)

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments:
For length of days, and years of life and peace, shall they add to thee.
Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.
Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase:

So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall overflow with new wine.

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction;

For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding:

For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.

She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.

Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor.

Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go: keep her; for she is thy life.

FROM CHAPTER VI. — SLOTH.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:

Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,

Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

So shall thy poverty come as a robber, and thy want as an armed man.

FROM CHAPTER XVII. — GENERAL INJUNCTIONS.

Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of feasting with strife.

A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren.

The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts.

A wicked doer giveth heed to false lips; and a liar giveth ear to a naughty tongue.

Whoso mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker: and he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished

Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers.

A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth.

A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool.

Whoso rewardeth evil for good, evil shall not depart from his house.

He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, both of them alike, are abomination to the Lord.

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

He loveth transgression that loveth strife: he that exalteth his gate seeketh destruction.

A merry heart is a good medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.

A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bore him.

He that hath knowledge spareth his words.

FROM CHAPTER XXVII.—FRIENDSHIP, ETC.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.

Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?

Open rebuke is better than hidden love.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

The full soul loatheth a honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbor that is near than a brother far off.

Iron sharpeneth iron: so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof: so he that waiteth on his master shall be honored.

As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

FROM CHAPTER XXX.—CONTENT.

Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die:

Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food that is needful for me:

Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and use profanely the name of my God.

FROM CHAPTER XXXI.—THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no lack of gain.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchants' ships, she bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms.

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night.

She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.

Strength and honor are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children rise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.

Favor is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates

SELECTED PROVERBS.

The lip of truth shall be established for ever: but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.

There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.

Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker; and he that is glad at calamity shall not be unpunished.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

Most men will proclaim every one his own kindness; but a faithful man who can find?

A just man that walketh in his integrity, blessed are his children after him.

Even a child maketh himself known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.

He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honor.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.

The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all.

Buy the truth, and sell it not.

If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

A word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in baskets of silver.

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat:

And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.

As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.

The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.

Better is the poor that walketh in his integrity, than he that is perverse in his ways though he be rich.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

Open thy mouth for the dumb, in the cause of all such as are left desolate.

ECCLESIASTES.

FROM CHAPTER III.—A TIME FOR ALL THINGS.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted:

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time for war and a time for peace.

FROM CHAPTER V.—THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE.

If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.

Morever the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field.

He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase;

When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes?

The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.

But those riches perish by evil adventure; and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand.

Naked shall he go again as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand.

FROM CHAPTER VII.—THE PRICELESS VALUE OF VIRTUE.

A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.

Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools.

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof; and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

Wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence: but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find out nothing that shall be after him.

All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness.

But though a sinner do evil a hundred times and prolong his days, yet do I know that it will be well with them that fear God.

FROM CHAPTER IX. — WISDOM.

This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me:

There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it; and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it.

Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man.

Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good.

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.

For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BIBLE BOOKS,

From which the history in this Volume is taken.

JOSHUA.

After the PENTATEUCH, we come to a second division in the Bible, containing *Joshua, Judges, Samuel* and *Kings.* This division is called the FORMER PROPHETS But they are books of history, not of prophecy. The prophecies are contained in the next division, called LATTER PROPHETS.

The Book of Joshua opens with the call of Joshua, after the death of Moses. It contains twenty-four chapters, falling naturally into two parts. The first twelve chapters tell of Israel's wars with the different nations inhabiting Canaan and the gradual conquest of the land. The second half deals with the allotment of the territory among the tribes of Israel and the closing scenes of Joshua's life.

Joshua is by some scholars joined with the *Five Books of Moses* into a new division—the Hexateuch (six-fold work).

JUDGES.

This book gets its name from the heroes and leaders whose lives it recounts and who were called "Judges." It falls into three divisions: Part first—Introduction, giving us the condition of the country after the death of Joshua. Part second—the Book proper, containing the narrative of the doings of the Judges. There were six greater Judges: Othniel; Ehud; Deborah and Barak; Gideon; Jephthah; Samson; also Abimelech styled "King." There were six minor Judges of whom we are told hardly anything—Shamgar; Tola; Jair; Ibzon; Elon; Abdon. Part third—tells two additional incidents, the migration of Dan to the north and the war against Benjamin. The book contains twenty-one chapters in all.

I. SAMUEL.

There was at first but one *Book of Samuel*, which was afterwards separated into two. Samuel, sometimes called the last of the Judges, gives his name to both volumes. For he founded the monarchy and the School of Prophets and his religious activity left a lasting influence on Israel.

The first book opens with the birth of Samuel and the last days of Eli's leadership. It proceeds with the fall of Eli's House, the taking of the ark and its return, the anointment of Saul as Israel's first king, the early life of David and his pursuit by Saul. It further tells of conflicts with the Philistines for the possession of the land and the complete defeat of the Amalekites. And it closes with Saul and Jonathan's death on Gilboa in an unsuccessful war against the Philistines.

II. SAMUEL.

The *Second Book of Samuel* tells how David was made king, first of Judah only, and, after the death of Ishbosheth his rival, of all Israel. Next follows the capture of Jebus, which is made the capital—Jerusalem. We are also given accounts of David's successful wars against Philistines, Ammonites, Moabites and Arameans, and the gradual extension of the kingdom almost to the Euphrates.

Of David's domestic life, we are told of his marriage with Bath-Sheba after wronging Uriah, the family strife ending in the death of his son Amnon, and Absalom's conspiracy against his father's throne; the civil war and rebellion that follow and their suppression.

The last part of the book from chap. xxi. to chap. xxiv. forms an appendix containing some additional details of David's reign —the famine, the numbering of the people, the exploits of David and his heroes.

I. KINGS.

Like *Samuel, Kings* also was at first but one book, afterwards broken in two. The book opens with the last days and death of

David, the insurrection of Adonijah and the anointment of Solomon as king. Much space is given to the building of the Temple. We are also told of Solomon's wisdom, his commerce and his glory—his royal palace and his many wives. Later comes the revolt of the Edomites and the Arameans, whom David had partly subjected. Then follows the insurrection of Jeroboam the Ephraimite, the discontent of the people and the subsequent division of the nation into two kingdoms—Israel and Judah. The rest of I. Kings will be described in detail in Volume III.

RUTH.

Ruth belongs to a division of the Bible called "The Five Megilloth" (Rolls); the others being *Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes* and *Esther.*

The reading of these "Five Megilloth" was assigned to specific dates in the Jewish Calendar.

Song of Songs was read at Passover, because it sings of the spring.

Ruth at Pentecost, being a harvest story.

Ecclesiastes at Tabernacles, the Feast of Ingathering; for a note of sadness runs through this book suggestive of the fall of the year, when the leaves are falling and the trees dying.

Lamentations on the Ninth of Ab, because it bewails the Fall of Jerusalem.

Esther on Purim, since it is the narrative on which the Feast is based.

The *Book of Ruth* is a story of the fidelity of a Moabitess to her mother-in-law Naomi, when bereavement and poverty had overtaken her. It follows the fortunes of the two women in the land of Israel, where Ruth labors in the fields to support them both. The charming story closes with Ruth's happy union with Boaz of Bethlehem-Judah.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BIBLE BOOKS,

From which the "Selections from Scripture" are taken.

PSALMS.

The Psalter, as this book is sometimes called, is a collection of one hundred and fifty religious songs. It is divided into five books: 1st, Ps. i.-xli.; 2d, xlii.-lxxii.; 3d, lxxiii.-lxxxix.; 4th, xc.-cvi.; 5th, cvii-cl. Each book closes with a short prayer of praise.

Every religious emotion of the heart is reflected in the Psalms —praise of God, repentance, supplication, faith, duty, suffering, hope. Some give us pictures of Israel's history—their woes and their triumphs. They form in themselves a complete book of religious devotion.

In their present arrangement, they formed a Ritual or Divine Service in the Second Temple. They are largely used in all our religious services, forming the main portion of our Prayer Books.

Psalms cxiii.-cxviii., called the Hallel (songs of praise), are read on the Festivals. Psalms cxx.-cxxxiv. are called "Songs of Degrees," because they were sung by the pilgrims as they approached nearer and nearer to Jerusalem. They form part of the Winter Sabbath Afternoon Service. Psalms cxlv.-cl., a praise series, form part of the Morning Service. Every religious occasion has its fitting Psalm. Psalm xc. is read at the Service of the Departed, Psalm xxx. at the dedication of a house; Psalm xxvii. ("The Lord is my light") concludes morning and evening services during the Hebrew month preceding Rosh Hashanah, and until the seventh day of Succoth; Psalm iii. at night; and many others.

Furthermore many of the Prayers are made up of passages from the Psalms.

PROVERBS

Proverbs is a book of maxims, wise sayings, and moral lessons. We may divide it into six parts:

1st: Chapter i.-ix.—The Praise of Wisdom—a father's warnings to his son.

2d: Chapter x.-xxii. 16, has the title "The Proverbs of Solomon," contains proverbs in the stricter sense.

3d: Chapters xxii. 17-xxiv.—A body of maxims for practical life.

4th: Chapters xxv.-xxix.—Additional Proverbs of Solomon.

5th: Chapter xxx.—Words of Agar.

6th: Chapter xxxi., 1-9—Words of Lemuel, a king.

Closing in last 21 verses with a picture of the virtuous woman.

Proverbs, Job and *Ecclesiastes* are together called "The Wisdom Literature" of the Bible.

ECCLESIASTES

Is a book of reflections on human life, its joys, its woes and its mysteries. They are put in the mouth of a wise king, who is called the "Preacher," hence the name Koheleth-Ecclesiastes. The tone of the book is sad as of one disappointed with life, though the mood changes from time to time and the author's faith in God abides.

The book opens with a description of the sorrows of life. The world seems to have no purpose. All is vanity. Knowledge cannot alter destiny; of pleasure we soon tire; even labor does not satisfy. There is much misery in our lot, and virtue does not always prevail.

This chain of musings breaks off and the writer utters some moral truths that have a more hopeful tone. Things are not as they seem; God, unseen, directeth; wisdom is better than folly; and toil sweetens the humblest lot; a good name is the most precious boon, while sorrow brings its blessings too.

Again there is a return to the despondent tone; the lot of the good and the evil is alike, but the better thought of life prevails. Good deeds bring most lasting satisfaction. The bread cast on the water returns after many days. Therefore in the morning sow thy seed; remember the Creator in the days of youth; fear God and keep His commandments.

END OF THE APPENDIX.

EXAMINATION QUESTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

1. Give the boundaries of Palestine?
2. What is the meaning of "The Shephelah"?
3. Locate the different nations that inhabited Palestine?
4. Recite some of the Bible descriptions of Canaan?

CHAPTER II.

1. How did the land east of the Jordan differ from that of the west?
2. State the early incidents in the life of Joshua.
3. What was promised to Rahab?
4. What had been Joshua's name and why was it changed?

CHAPTER III.

1. Why are not walls built round cities to-day?
2. For what was Jericho renowned?
3. What was Achan's sin?
4. How was A-i taken?
5. Where stood the people when the Law was read?

CHAPTER IV.

1. How did the Gibeonites deceive Israel?
2. How were they punished?
3. What does the Talmud say of Joshua's method of conquest?

CHAPTER V.

1. Where is Beth-Horon, Merom?
2. What did Israel gain through this first battle?
3. What through the second?
4. What was the moral consequence of Israel's victories?
5. What was the "Book of Jasher"?

CHAPTER VI.

1. Was all the land of Israel conquered by Joshua?
2. Locate on the map the position of each of the tribes.
3. Did any of the Canaanites remain in the land?
4. What portion was given to the Levites?
5. What were "cities of refuge"?

CHAPTER VII.

1. What tribes lived east of the Jordan?
2. Why did they build an altar?
3. Quote some of Joshua's last words.
4. Describe his character.
5. Once Joshua met an armed man, what did he ask him?

CHAPTER VIII.

1. Describe the condition of Israel during the rule of the Judges.
2. What was their idea of God?
3. What did they learn from the Canaanites?
4. What was a "Judge"?

CHAPTER IX.

1. Who was the first Judge?
2. What tribe did the Moabites attack, who appeared as deliverer?
3. What do you know of Shamgar?
4. What was the place of woman in ancient Israel?
5. Quote some of the rabbinic sayings about women.

CHAPTER X.

1. Where was Hazor, Jezreel?
2. What did Deborah for her people?
3. Who was Sisera?
4. What do you think of Jael's action?
5. Quote a verse from Deborah's Song.

CHAPTER XI.

1. Why did Gideon thresh his corn by stealth?
2. In what words did Joash defend his son?
3. How did Gideon reduce his army?
4. What was Jerub-baal supposed to signify?

CHAPTER XII.

1. Describe Gideon's first battle against the Arabs.
2. Why was Ephraim jealous?
3. What is the meaning of "the vintage of Abiezer"?
4. Why did Gideon refuse the crown? Who else refused one?

CHAPTER XIII.

1. Who was Abimelech?
2. Tell Jotham's parable and its meaning.
3. What became of Abimelech?
4. What is the meaning of "sowing a land with salt"?

CHAPTER XIV.

1. Where was Gilead and by what Israelite tribes was it inhabited?
2. What was Jephthah's vow?
3. How did Jephthah fare in his war with Ammon, how in his war with Ephraim?

CHAPTER XV.

1. Who were the Philistines?
2. Name and locate their chief cities.
3. What was a Nazarite?
4. Give Samson's riddle and the solution.
5. How did he punish the Philistines?

CHAPTER XVI.

1. How did Delilah betray Samson?
2. Where lay his strength?
3. How did the Philistines treat him?
4. What was his final revenge?
5. Where lay Samson's weakness.

CHAPTER XVII.

1. What was a Teraphim, an Ephod?
2. What became of Micah's image?
3. Why was there war with Benjamin?
4. How did it end?

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. Why did Naomi go to Moab?
2. Repeat Ruth's promise of fidelity to her mother-in-law.
3. Where was Bethlehem and what was Ruth's occupation there?
4. To whom did the gleanings of the fields belong?

CHAPTER XIX.

1. Whose right and duty was it to marry Ruth?
2. How was this right transferred to Boaz?
3. Explain the meaning of *Chalitzah.*
4. Ruth was a Moabitess—what lesson does this suggest?

CHAPTER XX.

1. What was the sorrow of Eli's life?
2. What was Hannah's vow?
3. What is the meaning of *Samuel?*
4. Recite some verses from Hannah's prayer.

CHAPTER XXI.

1. How did the priests behave in the Temple of Shiloh?
2. Tell the story of Samuel's call.
3. Do we all hear God's voice?
4. Explain "from Dan to Beer-Sheba."

CHAPTER XXII.

1. What happened in the battle with the Philistines near Shiloh?
2. What is the meaning of *Ichabod;* to whom was this name given and why?
3. Could the ark save Israel?
4. What was the name of the Philistine idol?

CHAPTER XXIII.

1. Who succeeded Eli as Judge?
2. Name and locate the places of Samuel's circuit.
3. What was the "School of Prophets"?
4. What was the earlier and the later idea of a prophet?

CHAPTER XXIV.

1. Why did Samuel not wish Israel to become a monarchy?
2. What was to be said on the other side?
3. Describe an Eastern despot.
4. What is an idealist?

CHAPTER XXV.

1. What was the threat of Nahash?
2. Name Saul's father and tribe.
3. How did he aid the people of Jabesh-Gilead?
4. What said Saul when asked to be king?
5. Quote from Samuel's farewell address; why has he been compared to Aristides?

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. How was Saul at first received?
2. Why had Israel no arms?
3. Who drove the Phœnicians from Sidon; where did they re-settle?
4. Was Saul wise in preparing to attack the powerful Philistines? In what respect is he compared to Washington?

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. Tell Jonathan's daring deed and its consequence.
2. How did he disobey the royal command?
3. How was he saved?
4. What is faith?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. Who was the captain of Saul's army?
2. Where did the Amalekites live and how had they treated Israel in the wilderness?
3. How fared the battle?
4. In what respect did Saul disobey Samuel?
5. Which is better, obedience or animal sacrifice?

CHAPTER XXIX.

1. Why were the Israelites afraid of Goliath?
2. What nerved David to attack him?
3. Quote David's words.
4. Why were the Israelites so expert with the sling?

CHAPTER XXX.

1. How did David's heroism affect Jonathan?
2. How did it affect Saul?
3. Mention one of David's accomplishments.
4. Tell of some famous friendships.

CHAPTER XXXI.

1. On what condition did Saul promise Merab to David?
2. Whom did David marry?
3. How did Jonathan save David; how did Michal save him?
4. Why would none attack David in the School of Prophets?
5. What prayers are omitted on the New Moon Festival?

CHAPTER XXXII.

1. Where was David's stronghold?
2. Tell David's treatment of his parents.
3. Why did Saul slay the priests of Nob?
4. What says the Talmud of Doeg?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1. Where was Keilah; how did David help its people?
2. What is the "Arabah"?
3. Tell how David spared Saul.
4. What was Saul's most striking trait?

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1. How did David and his men spend their lives?
2. How did Nabal return David's protection?
3. Who prevented bloodshed between the two?
4. What are the great events of the year in agricultural life?

CHAPTER XXXV.

1. With whom did David take refuge?
2. How did he deceive Achish?
3. How was he finally saved from fighting against his own people?
4. What happened in his absence from Ziklag?
5. How did David's conduct differ from that of Coriolanus?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1. How did Saul try to discover the future?
2. Point out on the map Shunem, Gilboa, Jezreel.
3. Tell the fate of Saul and his sons.
4. How had Saul treated witches in the early days of his reign?

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1. What were Saul's virtues? Give examples.
2. What were his failings? Give examples.
3. How did David receive the news of the king's death?
4. Recite David's lament.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1. Narrate the early incidents in the life of Judah.
2. From what tribes came—Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Saul, Othniel?
3. What was Judah's chief town?
4. Quote Jacob's blessing of Judah.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1. Who first anointed David king?
2. Who was his rival?
3. Name the two generals in the struggle for the throne.
4. How did David treat the murderers of his rival?
5. What does Ishbaal mean, to what was it changed?

CHAPTER XL.

1. Give the date of David's accession.
2. Relate his two engagements with the Philistines.
3. How was Jebus taken; what new name was given it?
4. What was the importance of this conquest for Israel?

CHAPTER XLI.

1. Name Jonathan's surviving son.
2. How did David treat him?
3. How did he treat the sons of Saul? Why?
4. Tell Rizpah's act of devotion.

CHAPTER XLII.

1. How completely were the Philistines defeated?
2. How were the Moabites and the Ammonites treated?
3. Tell David's Syrian conquests.
4. Did Israel keep its Syrian possessions?

CHAPTER XLIII.

1. Relate David's act of chivalry.
2. Give the extent of David's kingdom.
3. What advantages were obtained from an alliance with Tyre?
4. Name Daniel's officers.

CHAPTER XLIV.

1. What was David's sin?
2. Give Nathan's parable.
3. How did David receive his rebuke?
4. What is the meaning of *Jedidiah*, of *Solomon*?

CHAPTER XLV.

1. How was Amnon's sin avenged?
2. Tell what you know of the wise woman of Tekoa.
3. How did Absalom behave on his return from exile?
4. How did he steal the hearts of the people?

CHAPTER XLVI.

1. What was Absalom's purpose in going to Hebron?
2. What leading man was won over to his conspiracy?
3. Who followed David in his flight?
4. What was David's advice to Hushai?
5. What enemy did David meet on the Mount of Olives; why did the king spare him?

CHAPTER XLVII.

1. What was Ahithophel's advice?
2. What was Hushai's?
3. Who led the three divisions of David's army?
4. Where did the battle take place, and what became of Absalom?

CHAPTER XLVIII.

1. How did David try to restore peace?
2. How was Shimei treated?
3. Who was Barzillai?
4. Who was guilty—Ziba or Mephibosheth?

CHAPTER XLIX.

1. What was the consequence of David's favoritism towards Judah?
2. What was the fate of Amasa, of Sheba?
3. Where was Abel-Beth-Maachah?
4. Why did David number the people?
5. Why did the people object to counting?

CHAPTER L.

1. Who now sought the throne and who aided him?
2. In what ways did David show that he was a religious man?
3. What were his chief faults?
4. How was he thought of in later days?
5. What is the meaning of "Messiah"?

CHAPTER LI.

1. How did Solomon begin his reign?
2. Relate his dream.
3. Tell the story of the judgment of Solomon.
4. Why was Solomon called "The Wise"?
5. In what condition do we find the Canaanites in his reign?

CHAPTER LII.

1. How were the rafts brought from Tyre to Jerusalem?
2. What was the site of the Temple?
3. Describe the Temple and give its dimensions.
4. Give a quotation from Solomon's prayer.
5. Were there any human figures in the Temple decoration?

CHAPTER LIII.

1. Describe Solomon's palace and its contents.
2. In what did Solomon trade?
3. Where was Ezion-Geber; what was built here?
4. What were Tarshish ships, at what points did they touch?
5. What was "Cabul," how much was a talent?

CHAPTER LIV.

1. Relate the different outbreaks at the opening of Solomon's reign.
2. How did Solomon behave in his latter years?
3. Why were the people discontented?
4. Who was Jeroboam; what did he attempt?
5. What foreign king tried to sow discord in Israel?